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JANUARY 2006

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425 First Languages

That's what 5 million students bring to U.S. classrooms.

HOW TO REACH THEM? SEE PAGE 24.

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JANUARY

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features

COVER 24

425 First Languages

According to the U.S. Department of Education, children enrolled in our schools bring with them more than 425 first languages. We talked to ELL specialists, who offer strategies and tips for reaching your English learners.

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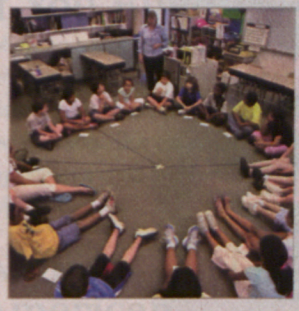

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PHOTO TOP: DANNY PECK; PHOTO LEFT: RAY TANAKA; PHOTOS RIGHT TOP: JONATHAN OLSON; BOTTOM: NEA ARCHIVES

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ILLUSTRATION LEFT: MICHAEL SLOAN; SMALL PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATION FROM TOP: GUILLERMO CUENCA; GETTY IMAGES AND C. LOPEZ; GETTY IMAGES; CRAIG LINE; PATTI REDWAY. COVER ART: GROFF CREATIVE, INC.

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When Trilingual Isn't Enough

My friend Gerry, a Boston-area teacher for more than 25 years, got his bachelor's degree in Russian. While teaching, he became a big fan of Harvard extension courses, and he went on to become fluent in French and Spanish. This love for language made him an adaptable communicator in his increasingly diverse classroom. Then, at the beginning of one school year, he found out he was getting three students who didn't speak English. Their native language? Vietnamese. It was a language no school staffer spoke, and no resources or support were going to accompany these children. ¶ Gerry immediately went in search of material so that he could at least welcome them. But it was the first time I'd seen him frustrated over language. He realized, in the end, that it didn't matter how many languages he knew. There would always be some child adrift in a different, native tongue until he could figure out how to anchor them. ¶ This was back in the 1980s. Since then, American classrooms have grown all the more diverse. As Mary Ellen Flannery reports in this month's cover story (page 24), U.S. schoolchildren bring with them an astounding 425 native languages (and counting!) to the classroom. But as her story notes, "Language Can't Be a Barrier." So read on for realistic ways you can reach students who speak languages you don't. ¶ We'd like to know the issues you've faced around languages at school. If you've found solutions, we'd like to hear about those, too. E-mail us at neatoday@nea.org, or use the snail mail address below. For more info on what educators are doing for English-language learners, check us out on the Web at www.neatoday.org.

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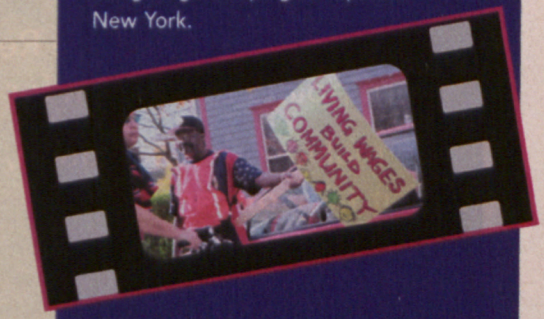
This month on neatoday.org

We've got the English Language Learner resources you need Sit in on a model classroom—watch a video of an ELL teacher at work; access standards-based lesson plans, activities, and games for all ages; click onto multilingual materials, dictionaries and more!

The award goes to... you decide! Vote for the best movies starring educators in our online ballot.

The Fight for Fair Pay
Be inspired by a video clip featuring a determined group of education support professionals who waged—and won—a living wage campaign in upstate New York.



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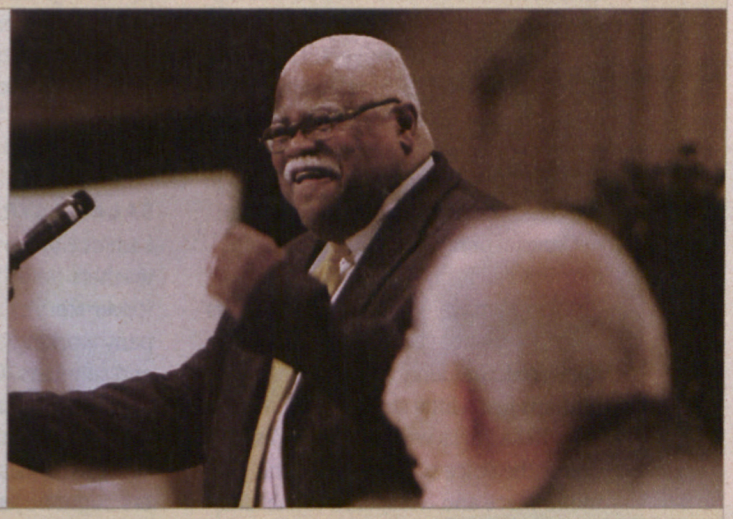
Team NEA, Let's Get it Started!

Every time I come in contact with NEA members—whether it's through the pages of *NEA Today*, via e-mail, on the phone, or face-to-face—I am sure to do one thing. I convey the immense pride I feel in every single one of NEA's 2.7 million members who have accepted the call to educate our nation's students and children.

As a 35-year veteran teacher, I know the work is tough. I know you don't always get clear signals that you are making a difference. But here's the truth: Team NEA, you *are* making a difference—in all kinds of ways and in all kinds of places. And what better time than now—at the beginning of a new year—to celebrate our victories and inspire ourselves for the work ahead?

Not On Our Watch! Led by the California Teachers Association, we helped defeat harmful initiatives backed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. He wanted to increase teacher probations from two to five years, cut school funding by over $4 billion per year, and silence the political voice of unions. We helped to create a powerful grassroots effort that delivered a loss the governor won't soon forget.

"We helped to create a powerful grassroots effort that delivered a loss the governor won't soon forget."
—REG WEAVER



In Colorado, our efforts inspired voters to stand up for education and public services by rolling back the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR)—a law that destroyed funding and sent the state to the bottom of national rankings on education, health care, and social services.

And we helped elect two governors who are friends of public education—Jon Corzine in New Jersey and Tim Kaine in Virginia.

Much More to Do. With this year's mid-term elections just months away, we must help to elect more friends of public education and prepare for the 2008 presidential race.

Of course, the so-called No Child Left Behind Act will remain at the top of our list of priorities. In November, the court dismissed our lawsuit against the federal government. We charged them with imposing regulations on schools and districts without providing the financial resources to put them in place. According to the court, the government is only prohibited from imposing additional requirements beyond those that are in the statute and failing to pay for *them*.

But we're not giving up. Congress is considering cuts of $780 million to NCLB programs—reducing funding *below* the level set three years ago. They are also planning to cut $7 billion in federal assistance for the student loans that help many minority students get ahead.

We will continue to tell Congress and the Administration to fix and fund the law, change its emphasis on standardized testing, and end sanctions that do not help schools improve. We will push even harder for broader curriculum and instruction that focuses on richer academic learning, not test preparation. Finally, we will work for full funding of Title I to ensure that 100 percent of eligible children are served. With reauthorization on the horizon, we want to fix the flaws in NCLB, once and for all.

My friends, we have many challenges ahead. But with you leading the way, we've got more victories coming, too. Every day, you give your all in America's public schools. I know you will never give up when it comes to holding this nation's leaders accountable for their responsibility to America's school children. Best wishes for a wonderful New Year. You are the *best!* NEA appreciates you and so do I.

Reg Weaver

NEA PRESIDENT REG WEAVER

PHOTO: SANDY HUFFAKER

Playing the College Game

Programs like AVID are to be commended for the skills students are taught (cover story, November). In our district, we believe beginning the post-secondary training discussion in high school is too late. When my seventh-graders leave the class, they understand why high school matters, what types of post-secondary options are out there, requirements for careers, and how to complete college and financial aid applications.

JULIE MOORE
Silverdale, Washington

I find it troublesome that we as educators push for pie in the sky, but forget to help students gain other important skills if they don't reach those goals. With growing demand and salaries for skilled labor, why aren't we looking at breaking generational poverty by focusing on giving students employable technical skills? The mantra "everyone can go to college" is true. Everyone can go, but not everyone will succeed.

JEREMY GIBSON
Topeka, Kansas

REMEMBERING ROSA PARKS

Twenty years ago, I was a young elementary school teacher determined to teach my students about the civil rights movement and Rosa Parks. I learned that she was working then in the Detroit office of Congressman John Conyers. The next day at school, the kids and I generated a list of questions for this great lady. There were no cell phones, speaker phones, phone cards, and certainly no phones in the classroom back then, so we had to get special permission to place a long distance call from the principal's office.

"Good morning, Rep. John Conyers' office," a friendly yet professional voice answered. Suddenly I got nervous and perhaps just a little starstruck. "Uh, um, does Rosa Parks work there?" "Yes, she does," the voice said. I covered the mouthpiece and whispered to the kids and the principal, "She does!" Then I became very nervous and starstruck.

"Oh. Uh, what's she like?" I blurted into the receiver.

"Well, I'm just a normal person. Can I help you?"

As I passed the telephone around the crowded principal's office and watched my third graders conduct an interview with the mother of the civil rights movement, I understood for the first time the real importance of Rosa Parks' life.

MICHAEL MCSWEENEY
Tacoma, Washington

SALARY STRUGGLES

I am one of the highly paid Connecticut teachers noted in your October issue (cover story). I also run a painting company working on weekends, vacations, and summers. Until recently, I held a third job as a karate instructor. One must take into account the cost of living when comparing salaries. While many teachers might be jealous of my salary, they wouldn't want my property taxes, energy costs, and consumer prices.

STEVE PATARINI
Old Saybrook, Connecticut

In the case of a teacher's salary, the number of hours worked per year must be taken into consideration. Every fall, I decide to figure out my real salary per hour, but I end up spending so much of my after-school and weekend time on preparation for my classes that I soon lose track.

PAMELA KAMODY
Saxonburg, Pennsylvania

I am substitute teaching for less than $11 per hour, with no benefits, and would love one of those "low-paying" teaching jobs. Teaching offers a family-friendly schedule, great benefits, personal and professional fulfillment, and in most states, a very respectable wage. If you have a contract job, be thankful.

TANYA PAGES
Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan

I am a real oldie, at 92. The problem of low pay has bugged me all my life. I hope teachers will win the fight for more money and get past the idea that teachers are like nuns, who do it all for love.

GENEVIEVE MADGE BASTIAN
Tomah, Wisconsin

SCHOOL SEGREGATION

Jonathan Kozol is right that students learn crucial information from one another ("American Apartheid," November). Schools are created as much by students and parents as by educators. Most education reform is based on the erroneous assumption that education is a series of transactions between teachers and students. Worse, many reforms assume the worst of teachers. Until we

CYBER-COMMENTARY

HEARD ON THE BOARDS

I am a supporter of Jonathan Kozol. In regards to the achievement gap, I think students of color have a wealth of things to teach white students—if only each student could see the wonderful things to be learned from each other.

Newton, Massachusetts

I'm a student teacher at a school destroyed in Katrina. What an experience! Most students have returned, which is very uplifting. But several teachers and students also lost their homes. Slowly and surely though, the Gulf Coast will rebuild and be better than ever, and I'll have a unique story to tell my own children and future students. I have to say I couldn't have gotten a better real-life experience for my student teaching.

Gulfport, Mississippi

WANT TO WEIGH IN?

Chat with your colleagues on NEA's discussion boards at **www.neatoday.org/talkback.html**.

are willing as a society to create incentives for suburban districts to pull students from the inner cities nearby, then the apartheid Kozol describes so well will remain a painful reality.

MATTHEW BROWN
Worcester, Massachusetts

The Kozol interview hammers home the biggest problem in education today: teachers don't stand together often enough or strongly enough. We all decry injustice, lack of thoughtful and carefully planned change, low pay, and the fact that we're undervalued yet overcriticized. But we do too little to stop any of it. Kozol is calling us all to stop closing our doors to just teach and start teaching inside and outside of our classrooms.

LIISA POTTS
Maple Valley, Washington

caglecartoons.com
HEAVENS! HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO PROVIDE QUALITY EDUCATION IF THEY TAKE AWAY PART OF OUR FUNDING?
IRONIC, ISN'T IT?
APPEALS COURT RULES AGAINST STATE VOUCHERS
PRIVATE SCHOOLS
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

There are some cracks in Kozol's speculations. Based on the conduct of the students, the questions are more about culture than color. How long should you ask someone to tolerate baggy pants, shirt tails out, slouchy deportment, bad attitudes, destruction of the English language, and parents who are hard to get ahold of? The parents and children Kozol writes about have every opportunity in this world to succeed. This teacher is tired of the "everybody is a victim" philosophy. Placing the blame on laws and statutes passed by duly elected representatives is ridiculous.

THOMAS MURPHY APPLING
Germantown, Tennessee

PROUD TO CARE

Your President's Viewpoint (November) was very touching. I am a resident of Florida and experience hurricane days quite often. Our system in Pinellas County quickly reached out to help our superintendent's former schools in Louisiana, as did many systems without such an intimate connection. I am very proud of my profession and the impact we make daily.

DEBORAH SMALBACH
Oldsmar, Florida

A NOVEMBER TO REMEMBER

Your November issue kept me going back for more, page after page, each article, each infobit. All the wonderful people left me feeling inspired by a sense of strength and goodness.

BEATRICE RICHMOND
Camp Verde, Arizona

GET THEM TALKING

It is important for us to encourage thinking in our students so they will be prepared to be citizens in a democracy ("Should teachers express their views on controversial topics in class?" October.) I encourage students in my high school biology class to discuss stem cell research. They must realize that people hold different opinions and that they don't have to share anyone else's opinion.

JOAN M. BOWDEN
Alfred, New York

LET'S TALK

Share your ideas, comments, and opinions with *NEA Today* in one of four ways:

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Letters are edited for length and clarity.

CARTOON: JEFF PARKER

upfront

Trends
Facts
Innovators
Wisdom
Research
First 5
News
Quotes
Humor

Much Pain, But No Gain

The term 'scientifically based' appears 115 times in the so-called No Child Left Behind law.

SO WE HOPE the U.S. Department of Education is paying close attention to *scientific* research on the central strategy of NCLB—high-stakes testing to increase math and reading scores—and whether it actually works. Because the answer is, it turns out, no.

Three years ago, researchers at Arizona State University examined the impact of high-stakes testing, comparing scores in states that instituted such testing with those that didn't. They found the extra pressure on teachers and students made no consistent difference in test scores. Since then, other studies exploring the issue have found little to no effect on student achievement.

The latest national study, led by Sharon Nichols of the University of Texas, is by far the most systematic. It looked at several forms of high-stakes pressure, from graduation requirements to teacher penalties, and found no consistent link between that pressure and scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the test often called "The Nation's Report Card." At the same time, the researchers reported that high-stakes testing may be increasing the dropout rate.

Nichols' conclusion: It's time to call a moratorium on high-stakes testing, because there is no scientific basis for thinking it leads to more learning. For more, see the report at www.greatlakescenter.org/pdf/EPSL-0503-101-EPRU.pdf.

NESTING TEACHERS

Educators are no migratory birds, it seems. A full 61 percent first teach in schools within 15 miles of their hometown, and 85 percent within 40 miles, according to a recent Stanford University study. That's a bad habit for urban areas, which don't produce sufficient numbers of teachers—and consequently must go to great lengths to attract them.

PHOTOS: DIGITAL VISION

¿Habla español?

EVEN GRADE SCHOOLERS CAN TALK THE TALK

For 20 minutes each day, fourth- and fifth-graders in Sandra Rosado's class at Perkins Elementary in St. Petersburg, Florida, aren't allowed to speak—in English, that is.

But they hardly miss it.

Although foreign language study typically doesn't begin until high school, "it's remarkable how much [my students] learn and love Spanish," says Rosado, who developed a Spanish language program for her students 11 years ago.

And she's not the only one. Similar elementary programs are taking off nationally, notes Mary Lynn Redmond, a Wake Forest University associate education professor. Part of the reason is America's new interest in life abroad. "There is this realization that international education is increasingly important...especially when it comes to business and national security," Redmond says.

In addition, new research shows foreign language study in elementary school helps develop thinking and listening skills, which is, in a word, *excelente!*

—MARY ROBBINS

[STATISTIC]

The average **NUMBER** of **LIBRARY BOOKS** borrowed per student each week.

SOURCE: NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

VIRTUAL WORLD GIVES

BROTHER, CAN YOU SPARE SOME SUPPLIES?

DON'T MISS THESE WEB SITES THAT MATCH TEACHERS WITH DONORS.

When Jeremy Merrill needed supplies for his art students at Hoover Senior High School in San Diego, he didn't—for once—reach into his own wallet. Instead, he reached out to the virtual world for help—and boy, did he get it. Last spring he received art canvases worth $25,000.

From pianos to toilet paper, a Web site called iLoveSchools.com is helping more than 30,000 teachers get donated materials. Teachers post their requests, under personal home pages, then donors can send supplies directly to the school.

iLoveSchools.com
a helping hand for teachers

While more appropriate funding by state and federal government would be a better solution, such private assistance can provide a welcome stopgap. To register, check out www.iloveschools.com or www.adoptaclassroom.com, a project of Jones New York.

—M.R.

PHOTO TOP: AP/WORLDWIDE

Notepad

NCLB: A Hindrance?

If the so-called No Child Left Behind Law really "is working," as U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings recently said, then why aren't students reading better? Why aren't they improving at a faster rate in math? Recent scores from the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress show that American fourth-graders are reading at about the same level as they did in 1992. And, while math scores had been steadily improving, progress has slowed in the past two years—just when NCLB was making its presence felt in schools. "There's a question as to whether No Child is slowing down our progress," said Jack Jennings, president of the Washington-based Center on Education Policy.

Salary Blues

A recent union study proves what you already know: Teacher salaries aren't what they used to be. The average teacher salary in 2003–04 was $46,597, a 2.2 percent increase over the previous year. At the same time, the rate of inflation in 2004 was 2.7 percent. That adds up to less money for you—and that doesn't even include cuts in health insurance and retirement benefits!

Have a great idea?

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The Envelope, Please!

WHICH ARE THE ALL-TIME BEST MOVIES STARRING TEACHERS? YOU DECIDE!

IT'S GETTING CLOSE to movie award season, and as Hollywood rolls out the red carpet for the year's top films, we want your votes for *NEA Today*'s version of the best flicks ever. Join us in saluting the most inspiring—or just plain groan-inspiring—teachers and support professionals to appear on the silver screen. Did you stand on your desk and cheer for Robin Williams in *Dead Poets Society*? Did you cringe at Jack Black's *School of Rock* shenanigans? Vote for your favorites in nine categories, including "Funniest," "Best Coach/Teacher," and "Most Inspiring Teacher" (above left). Click on **www.nea.org/neatoday/ballot.html** to cast your ballot and make your opinion count. Oscar night is March 5, so be sure to check back online that week to find out which films you and your colleagues crowned as the best!

GO FIGURE!

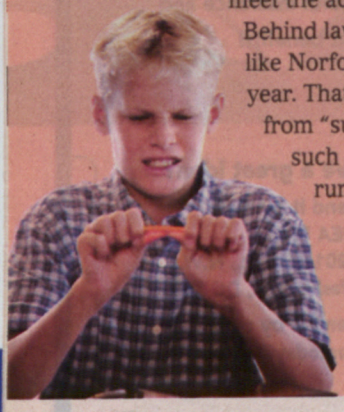
Try to make sense of this: The Norfolk City Public Schools District in Virginia nets one of the nation's top prizes in education—the Broad Prize for Public Education—for its success in raising the test scores of poor and minority students.

GREAT NEWS, RIGHT?

Well, wait for the kicker. Even as Norfolk wins its well-deserved honor, it fails to meet the adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals, as set by the No Child Left Behind law. The NCLB formula makes it very difficult for large urban districts, like Norfolk, to "make AYP," even if students make substantial gains year after year. That's because the law requires impressive (not just improved) scores from "subgroups" like English-language learners (smaller districts with few such students are allowed to skip the requirement). Other Broad Prize runner-ups, including San Francisco, also got F's from the feds.

"Here we have a district that made gains the whole nation recognized, yet NCLB doesn't see it," says Monte Mercer, president of the Education Association of Norfolk. "Just ludicrous."

—RITU SHARMA



PHOTOS TOP: CORBIS AND IMAGE SOURCE; PHOTO BOTTOM LEFT: THINKSTOCK; PHOTO BOTTOM RIGHT: CORBIS

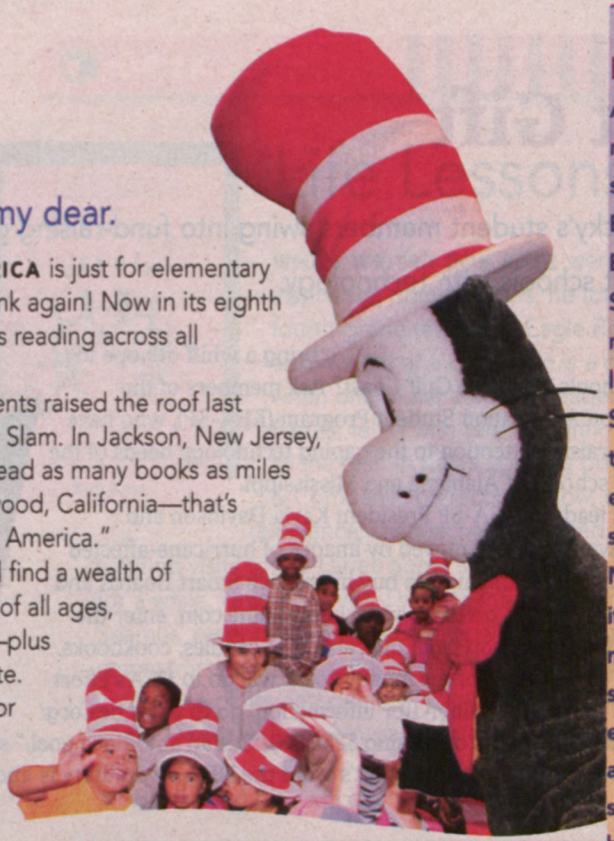
All Reading, All the Time

It's not (just) elementary, my dear.

THINK NEA'S READ ACROSS AMERICA is just for elementary students? Think it's just March 2? Think again! Now in its eighth year, Read Across America celebrates reading across all grades, all year long.

In Los Angeles, high school students raised the roof last year in the Words of Oneness Poetry Slam. In Jackson, New Jersey, middle school students collectively read as many books as miles between their hometown and Hollywood, California—that's 2,947!—symbolically "reading across America."

At www.nea.org/readacross, you'll find a wealth of resources and book lists for students of all ages, including English-language learners—plus an online tool kit to help you celebrate. While there, don't forget to sign up for the monthly RAA e-newsletter!



6 **[STATISTIC]**
The **PERCENTAGE** of **TEENAGERS** who say they often love what they're doing in class.

SOURCE: THE GALLUP ORGANIZATION

A Virtual Family

As the wind blew, the wires still hummed for support professionals.

Has anybody heard from Eddie Middleton? I am worried and wondering if he is OK!

The questions asked on NEA's ESP listserv usually aren't life or death. But in Hurricane Katrina's wake, the e-mail list served as virtual life rafts for some. From Louisiana, NEA-ESP Director Sharon Scott pleaded for supplies. Days later, from Delaware, boxes of soap arrived. From all over, people sent their prayers. "NEA-ESP Family, you are the best!" she wrote.

And Eddie Middleton? After rescuing neighbors from rooftops, he wrote, "Lost almost everything at home....Bottom line is, by the Grace of God, we are all together and safe."

For information on the listserv, go to www.nea.org/esphome.

PHOTO TOP: SCOTT ISKOWITZ; PHOTO BOTTOM: DIGITAL VISION

Capitol Report

NCLB Relief

As the deadline for teachers to meet the "highly qualified" provision of the so-called No Child Left Behind law (NCLB) approaches, Education Secretary Margaret Spellings has signaled some relief may be available. In a late October letter to state school officials, Spellings said states may be able to extend the deadline for teachers until the end of the 2006–07 school year—one additional year. NEA President Reg Weaver called it a welcome change, considering many of the best prepared states still need more time, but he pointed out that states might not get an answer on the extension until spring, since their request will hinge on January data. With that in mind, he urged the Department to simply extend the deadline for all.

Low Marks for NCLB

The more folks know about NCLB, the less they like it, according to a new PDK-Gallup poll. Of the public school parents who say they're familiar with the law, 27 percent view it favorably and about the same number view it unfavorably. However, of the parents who profess "a great deal" of knowledge about NCLB, just 37 percent like what they see and a whopping 57 percent say it stinks.

Got a story to share?

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A Smart Gift

Post-Katrina, Kentucky's student members swing into fund-raising gear to help the neediest schools with technology.

FIRST 5 YEARS

HOW DOES A COFFEE-SCENTED CANDLE bring a whiff of hope to disaster-struck schools along the Gulf Coast? Ask members of the Kentucky Education Association Student Program (KEA-SP), who have turned their fund-raising attention to the gaping technology needs of the newly devastated schools of Alabama and Mississippi.

Kentucky's emerging leaders, KEA-SP President Kayla Davidson and President-Elect Natalie Avant, were so moved by images of hurricane-affected schools that they've organized a campaign to buy interactive Smart Boards and other technology for them. To help, go to www.4schoolsonline.com, enter the school code KEA-SP-HELPS, and shop from the catalog of candles, cookbooks, cards, and other items. Forty percent of the money spent will go to KEA's effort.

As NEA has pledged to raise $1 million (for information, go to www.nea.org/disasterrelief), KEA-SP has set its eyes on raising $250,000. "It's an ambitious goal," says KEA's student organizer Charles Main. "But that's what the NEA community is about."

95

TRADE SECRETS

The skills you use on the job can help another member with a dilemma on the home front.

THIS MONTH: Health Occupations teacher Wendy Wilson, R.N., of South Boston, Virginia, offers tips on avoiding colds and the flu.

Stave Off Sniffles And Sneezes

Handwashing. This is your first line of defense in preventing infection. Alcohol-based antibacterial gels are okay, but excessive use actually can make skin more susceptible to germs. Good old soap and water will do the trick.

Cough or sneeze into the bend of your arm. And encourage your students to do the same! For a classroom lesson, I've taped together an 8-foot paper chain and asked the kids to guess why. You can imagine their looks when I tell them germs can travel 8 feet in a cough or sneeze. Now they think about what I said in class, and cover their mouths!

Keep well-hydrated and eat right. I know everyone gets tired of hearing "eat right, and drink plenty of fluids." But a healthy body is your best defense against colds and flu. If you eat junk, expect to feel like junk. If you don't drink enough non-carbonated fluids, your resistance to infection decreases, which opens the door to a cold taking over. But, if you provide your body with the proper nutrition, it can perform as it was designed to.

GOT A TIP TO SHARE?

We're looking for custodial and maintenance services professionals to advise fellow members on how to get **sparkling floors and stain-free carpets.** If you'd like to be considered, e-mail **clong@nea.org** with your name and local, a brief description of what you do, and your top three tips.

PHOTOS TOP: STOCKDISC AND THINKSTOCK; ILLUSTRATION BOTTOM: PAUL GILLIGAN

HITS AND MISSES

WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON NCLB?

Four years after its passage, how has the No Child Left Behind law affected you and your school?

- Boring test prep?
- A fresh focus on reaching at-risk students?
- Fewer art and music classes?
- No more teaching out-of-field?
- Something new and unexpected?

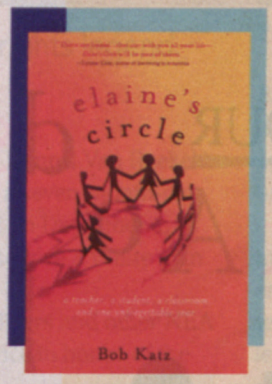
NEA Today would like to hear your stories and experiences demonstrating what does—and doesn't—work about this law. Please send to Alain Jehlen at ajehlen@nea.org.

[STATISTIC]

The **PERCENTAGE** of high school **STUDENTS** who say a teacher has made a positive difference in their lives.

SOURCE: THE METLIFE SURVEY OF THE AMERICAN TEACHER

BOOK FOCUS



Life Lessons

WHEN WRITER BOB KATZ went looking for true tales of inspiration from teachers, he found Elaine Moore, a retired fourth-grade teacher in Eagle River, Alaska, who believes, above all, that a classroom is a community. But, in 1993, when one of her students, eager and spirited Seamus Farrell, fell ill with terminal brain cancer, that notion was put to the test. In Katz's uplifting book, *Elaine's Circle* (Marlowe & Company), he recounts how, despite her administrator's reluctance, the teacher organized regular lunchtime, peer tutoring visits to the Farrell home so Seamus could keep on learning—and, for a while, keep on living. Through interviews with Moore, as well as Seamus' parents, neighbors, and now college-age classmates, Katz reconstructs an unforgettable year that celebrates kindness and community in the face of life and death. "'What do you think heaven's like?' [Seamus] finally asked, with eagerness and sincerity. 'Do you think there'll be pets in heaven?'"

Be warned: You will cry.

Closing the Gap

Money isn't everything—but it sure can help.

THE PROBLEM? Milwaukee's poor and minority students still lag behind their peers, particularly in math and science, and especially at the higher grades. The solution? More professional development for educators and an assortment of new "closing the gap action plans," paid for, in part, by a five-year $2.5 million grant awarded recently by The NEA Foundation. The Foundation has set a goal for a community partnership—led by the Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association (MTEA)—to work together to close the achievement gaps by 2010.

"The projects in the grant are all designed by educators and we think that's the way to do it. It is not a top-down approach, but something from the members at a local level," said Dennis Oulahan, president of MTEA. "We see some real possibilities for improvement now."

Demonstrating its commitment to student achievement, The Foundation provided a similar grant to Chattanooga in 2004. For more information about The NEA Foundation and its grants program, go to www.neafoundation.org.

—RITU SHARMA

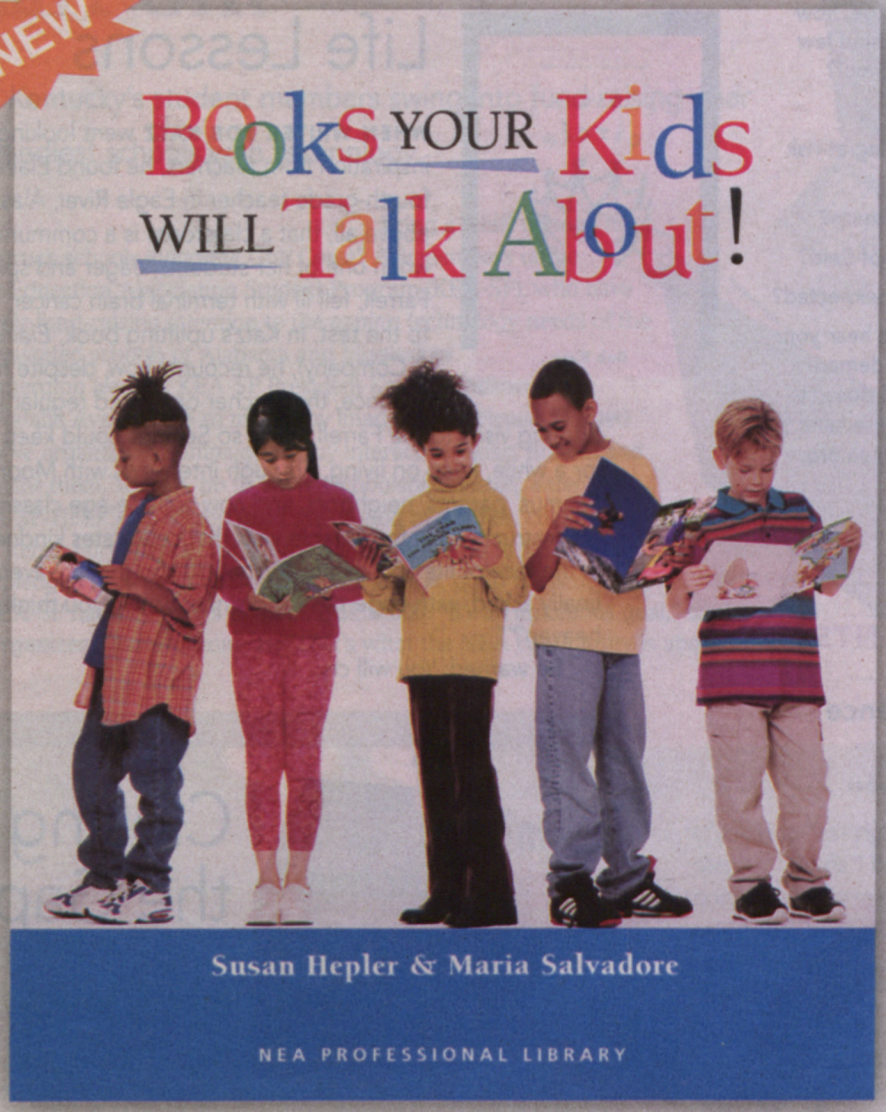
THE NEA FOUNDATION
www.neafoundation.org

Philip Forgit, a fourth-grade teacher at Rawls Byrd Elementary in Williamsburg, Virginia, received the NEA Foundation Award at the Foundation's 11th Annual Salute to Excellence in Education Gala in December. At the event, former President Bill Clinton and the NAACP also were honored for their commitment to education.

ILLUSTRATION BOTTOM: SIMON SHAW

A Guide to Children's Literature for Teachers and Parents (K-6)

NEW



Read any good books lately? It's fun to talk about our favorite books and literary conquests. Kids enjoy talking about their favorite books, too, and encouraging children to talk about what they've read is a powerful learning tool. So how can you connect kids with books that will inspire and motivate them? *Books Your Kids Will Talk About!* helps educators and parents navigate the ever-expanding universe of children's literature. This comprehensive, multicultural, annotated booklist is organized around themes that are important in a child's world. Teachers will find suggestions on how to integrate these books into the curriculum. Parents can use the books as a suggested reading list to foster lively discussion and self-exploration among young readers. Whether at home or in the classroom, it's easy to stir up a buzz about *Books!*

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Rosa Parks

NEA pays its respects to a civil rights legend.

Reg Weaver was 16 years old, Dennis Van Roekel was eight, Lily Eskelsen was a seven-month-old baby, and Rosa Parks was 42 on December 1, 1955, when she decided not to give a White man her seat on the bus.

Half a century later, the three NEA officers and other NEA leaders attended a moving memorial service in honor of the gutsy secretary of the Montgomery, Alabama, NAACP who helped launch the Civil Rights Movement.

"It was very emotional, being truly a part of history," said NEA President Weaver afterward. "By sitting down, Rosa Parks allowed someone like me to stand up for children and for public education."

Weaver recalled that in 1955, Parks' arrest was not at first recognized as a major development. He has more vivid memories of another event earlier that year: the murder and mutilation of Emmett Till, a 14-year-old Black boy, for allegedly whistling at a White woman. Till's mother decided to have an open casket funeral so the world could see the gruesome act. Weaver thinks the murder may have helped to spur Parks to make her decision, and the city's Black residents to launch their boycott.

Rosa Parks' act of resistance defeated Jim Crow laws.

The American South in 1955 was ripe for change. The previous year, the Supreme Court had overruled the doctrine of "separate but equal" schools. But on the ground, very little had yet changed. It was becoming clear that a decision from above would not be enough. It would take a massive push from below. Rosa Parks' decision began that push. As weeks of boycott stretched into months, the nation turned to watch Montgomery.

"By sitting down, Rosa Parks allowed someone like me to stand up for children and for public education."

—NEA PRESIDENT REG WEAVER

NEA Vice President Van Roekel said Parks' memorial service was all about the power of one individual who decided this was something she would do, without waiting for anyone else. But he pointed out that the Montgomery victory was won not by one person, but by hundreds of Black workers who, like Parks, each decided to take action.

"They didn't write flyers or give fiery speeches," said Van Roekel. "They didn't have money or a PR firm. But they got up long before the crack of dawn, took care of their families first, and then walked to work, rain or shine. Buses would go by, but for 381 days, no one rode. They changed the world."

NEA Secretary-Treasurer Lily Eskelsen, though too young in 1955 to remember anything about the boycott, remembers encountering segregation as she grew up, and as a sixth-grade teacher near Salt Lake City, Utah, she made sure her students learned about it.

"The textbook had two paragraphs on the Civil Rights Movement, so I used excerpts from the *Eyes On The Prize* television series and made my own unit. There were no Black children at our school and my students had only seen discrimination on television. But I told them I remembered being in Georgia when I was five, in kindergarten, and the gas stations had three bathrooms: men, women, and colored—I was just learning to read the signs.

"To a child, it didn't seem strange, it was just the way it is. It isn't until you get older that you start questioning whether there are bad laws, and what's your responsibility if there are. Rosa Parks said your responsibility is to not obey a bad law because there's a bigger law, the Constitution. We talked about all that.

"You might think that old black-and-white video would be boring to kids, but they were sitting on the edge of their seats with their mouths hanging open."

The Rosa Parks service was held on October 31 in Washington, D.C., at the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church just across the street from NEA headquarters. Hundreds of people who couldn't get in stood outside and listened for more than two hours to loudspeakers, or came into the NEA building, where the service was broadcast on large television monitors. NEA also arranged for hotel rooms for Parks' family nearby, and sponsored a breakfast for them in Montgomery, where the first of three services commemorating Parks' life was held.

—ALAIN JEHLEN

PHOTO: AP IMAGES

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VBNT0106

Shut Up!

Student journalists suffer censorship, but help is on the way.

"THE COURT explained that officials can censor student articles on 'potentially sensitive topics,' which may be 'unsuitable for immature audiences.'"

Katy Dean didn't set out to make waves; she just wanted to cover a major story for her school newspaper: two local residents had sued the school district, claiming that diesel fumes from the district's bus barn had made them sick.

But Superintendent Joan Sergent was not pleased with Dean's article and so axed it from the Utica (Michigan) High School *Arrow*. Undaunted, Dean sued Sergent and the school district claiming a violation of her First Amendment rights.

In November 2004, a Michigan federal court agreed, ruling that the superintendent's censorship was unconstitutional.

According to Mark Goodman, an attorney who runs the Washington, D.C.-based Student Press Law Center, Dean's case is one of the few court victories for high school student journalists in the last 20 years. That's because of a 1988 decision by the Supreme Court—*Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*—that gives school officials broad powers to control the content of school-sponsored student publications.

In *Hazelwood*, the Court ruled that, if a student newspaper is part of the curriculum, school officials have the right to exercise "editorial control" over the content of the paper, as long as their decisions are "reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns."

What does that mean? The Court explained that officials can censor student articles on "potentially sensitive topics," which may be "unsuitable for immature audiences." On that basis, the Court upheld a principal's order to delete two stories about the impact of teen pregnancy and parental divorce on several Hazelwood students.

Applying this "Hazelwood standard," other federal courts have made the following rulings:

SCHOOL OFFICIALS IN NEVADA could ban Planned Parenthood ads from the school newspaper;

A MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL could confiscate copies of a student magazine because of an article on teen suicide and a poem containing profanity; and

AN OHIO PRINCIPAL acted properly in seizing the entire press run of a school newspaper that carried a potentially libelous article on underage drinking.

So why did Katy Dean win her case? The court held that her article was "fair and balanced" and contained nothing remotely "unsuitable" for high school students. More important, the real reason the story was censored was because the superintendent disagreed with the reporter's point of view.

If "the press in a democratic society is to have any value," the court wrote, "student journalists must be allowed to publish viewpoints contrary to those of state authorities without intervention or censorship."

—MICHAEL D. SIMPSON
NEA OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

ANY QUESTIONS?

Advisors to student publications often are caught in the middle of censorship disputes. If you or your students need legal advice, help is just a phone call or mouse click away.

Founded in 1974 by the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial, the Student Press Law Center (SPLC) is the only law center dedicated to defending the rights of student journalists to cover important issues of concern to young people. Executive Director Mark Goodman reports that the Center averages 40 to 50 requests for information and legal assistance each week.

On its free Web site, the SPLC has posted legal memoranda on various issues such as press censorship, libel, and copyright law, as well as landmark court decisions. The Web site contains a special section for faculty advisors that includes a legal guide, "Student Media Advisers and the Law," along with practical tips for "fighting (and surviving)" censorship efforts. There also are links to lesson plans for teaching about the First Amendment and journalism ethics.

In the wake of the *Hazelwood* decision, the SPLC has been pushing for the passage of state laws to guarantee press freedoms for student journalists. To date, six states have enacted this legislation: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, and Massachusetts.

Find the SPLC Web site at www.splc.org, or contact the Center by phone at 703-807-1904 or e-mail at splc@splc.org.

PHOTO: CORBIS

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The NEA Foundation Congratulates 2005 Teaching Excellence Awardees

The NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence
Philip Robert Forgit
Virginia Education Association

Award Finalists and Recipients of *The Horace Mann–NEA Foundation Awards for Teaching Excellence*

James D. Harris
Texas State Teachers Association

Donna McCreadie
California Teachers Association

Kathleen H. Thomas
Delaware State Education Association

Stephanie Winkler
Kentucky Education Association

We also congratulate the 33 recipients of *The I CAN Learn®–NEA Foundation Awards for Teaching Excellence*; *The AOL@SCHOOL–NEA Foundation Award for Technology Leadership*; and *The William G. Carr, The Hilda Maehling, The Christa McAuliffe*, and *The Don Rollie Awards*. For a complete list of awardees, visit **www.neafoundation.org**.

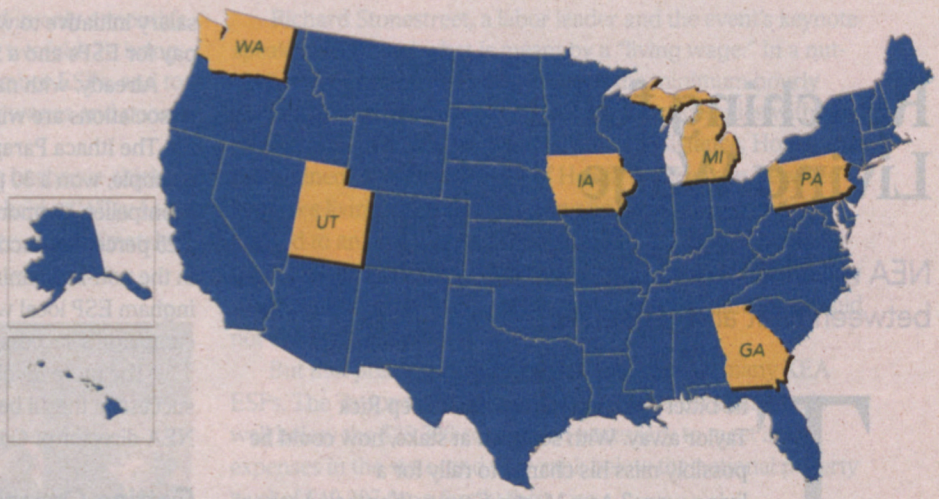
The NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence recognizes, rewards, and promotes excellence in teaching and advocacy for the profession. The awardee receives **$25,000** and national recognition.

Apply for the 2006–2007 awards by the April 1, 2006 deadline through your state affiliate.

THE NEA FOUNDATION

Taking Stock in Schools

UTAH The slogan for the **Utah Education Association's (UEA)** campaign to improve public schools gets to the point: "No Excuses! Invest in Public Schools." It also gets around on billboards, car window stickers, and lawn signs. Aimed at policymakers, the campaign promotes public schools as financial investments for creating jobs, helping stabilize property values, attracting new businesses, and helping close the economic gap. "Our goal with this campaign is to do what we do best—educate, motivate, and empower," says UEA President Pat Rusk. "We have choices on how our tax dollars are spent. We can choose to give more tax breaks to corporations, or we can choose to invest in schools, our communities, and our state." For more information on the campaign, see www.utea.org.



Heard It on the Radio

IOWA The **Iowa State Education Association (ISEA)** has developed a community-awareness campaign to boost teacher salaries. Instead of organizing the usual campaign rallies and town hall meetings, ISEA produced 60-second radio spots that aired on almost 90 stations. The campaign was launched after two national surveys—one from NEA and one from the American Federation of Teachers—placed Iowa teachers near the bottom of the pay scale. The advertisements link quality teachers to quality public schools. "If we want better schools, we need great teachers," the announcer says. "We cannot hope to attract and keep the best in the business if we refuse to pay them a competitive wage."

Standing Firm

PENNSYLVANIA The **Seneca Valley Secretaries and Paraprofessionals of Pennsylvania** began preparing for negotiations three years prior to the expiration of their contract. First they formed a bargaining committee, then they interviewed members as part of a negotiations survey. The **Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA)** research staff compiled data on area living costs and wages. "We told [members] the board might...tell us we could have higher salaries but they'd have to cut positions," says UniServ representative Joy Conley Kacik. That's just what happened. But Association members held firm, then countered by distributing 3,000 flyers and airing a radio ad. The board finally rescinded its proposed cuts and passed a $3 million tax increase. Secretarial salaries were raised 18 percent over four years. Paraprofessionals' hourly starting salary increased from $5.50 to $8.60 or $9.60, depending on classification. The contract ends in 2008.

Between a Rock and a Hard Compromise

MICHIGAN Approximately 800 teachers and staff in the Rockford and Kent Intermediate School Districts recently agreed to new contracts that double prescription co-payments to $10 and $20. This could be indicative of a national trend as districts negotiate with unions to accept less-expensive care options. The reason: skyrocketing health care costs. "We know what the climate is, how insurance is going up," said Sue Oaks, president of the **Rockford Education Association (REA)**, as quoted in *The Grand Rapids Press*. "And by doing it, we got two more years of health care." As with workers in the private sector, public service employees are pressured to sometimes compromise on premium benefits to preserve a less-expensive health plan.

A First for Georgia ESPs

GEORGIA The first education support professional (ESP) conference to be held in Georgia took place in August of last year. Almost 90 ESPs gathered in Macon for the two-day event. "About 75 percent of attendees had never been to an Association meeting outside their local," says Rosa Ward, event coordinator and a UniServ director with the **Georgia Association of Educators (GAE)**. Superintendents, board members, and teachers also attended. One workshop addressed ESP contracts, which are nonexistent in Georgia. ESPs, who comprise almost 17 percent (5,233) of GAE's total membership of 30,844, are hired "at will." Nationally, ESP conferences are offered in only a handful of states, such as Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Washington.

Faculty Wisdom Says 'Unionize'

WASHINGTON A 2002 state law that granted faculty members collective bargaining rights has provided much-needed legislative support for faculty members at three state universities. Faculty unions at Central and Eastern Washington universities are negotiating their first contracts under the law. Faculty members at Western Washington University are also close to a union vote. Organizers for the **United Faculty of Western Washington** are asking for a broad-based, inclusive union in the face of university administrators who want to exclude faculty chairs, academic directors, and many part-time faculty members. Washington Education Association (WEA) officials say roughly 720 faculty members will be eligible to vote.

IMAGE CONSTRUCTION: GROFF CREATIVE, INC.

Reaching for a Living Wage

NEA rallies for educators forced to choose between heat and groceries.

The bitter cold and rain couldn't keep Rick Taylor away. With so much at stake, how could he possibly miss his chance to rally for a living wage? As a Martin County (Kentucky) school board maintenance employee, Taylor earns just $8.56 an hour, or $16,435 annually. That adds up to $448 in his wallet every two weeks, not enough to cover living expenses, much less to take his wife and three youngest children to watch their oldest son play halfback on the Clark High School football team. The $25 admittance fee is almost a day's take-home pay.

Without a salary increase, Taylor will again be forced to choose between buying groceries and heating his house when temperatures drop. Last winter, the family experienced some frosty nights. "With property taxes and heating costs rising, we might have to give up the house," says Taylor, a three-year employee. "We built that house."

And Taylor isn't the only education support professional (ESP) struggling with these choices. Even as Kentucky ESPs rallied for increased salaries in Prestonsburg on that cold, October morning, their colleagues all over the country are working on living wage campaigns that promise to obtain wages that are commensurate with the expenditures of a family living above the poverty line.

NEA has taken up the call nationally with a new salary initiative to win an "appropriate living wage" as starting pay for ESPs and a $40,000 minimum salary for teachers.

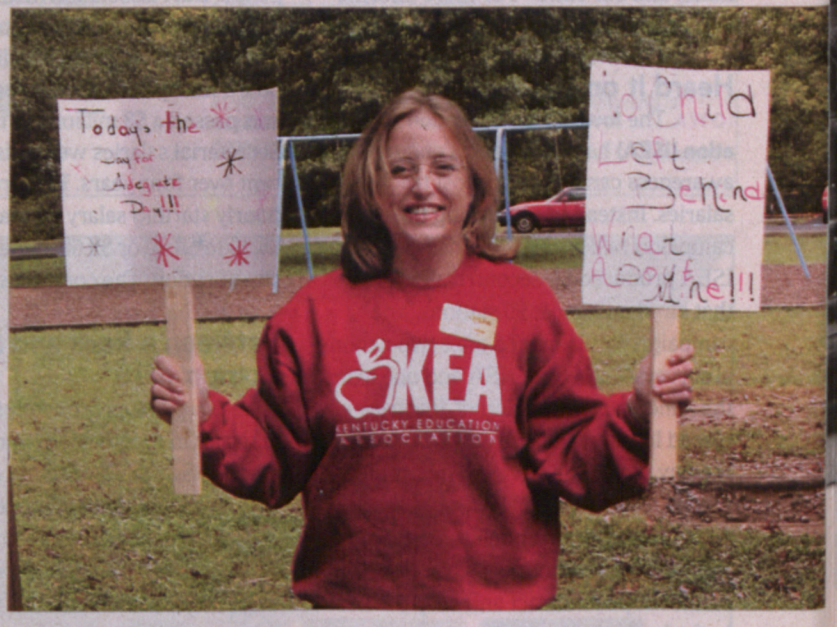
Already, with national and state support, several local Associations are winning their battles for respect and wages.

The Ithaca Paraprofessionals Association of New York, for example, won a 50 percent wage increase over three years. In Montpelier, Vermont, ESPs won a 6 percent wage increase and a 25 percent reduction in health insurance co-payments. Even in the non-bargaining state of Alabama, members of the Birmingham ESP local won a 43 percent wage increase. The key to a campaign's success, say organizers, is member involvement.

"The more involved members are at the local level, the more successful they'll be at gaining a living wage," says Bill Raabe, NEA director of Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy.

Getting Organized

And members in Kentucky are getting involved. The ESPs' living wage campaign, which kicked off on Labor Day with the goal of increasing ESP wages at schools in five counties,



Are You Paid a Fair Wage?

Probably not! Here's practical advice for getting a local campaign off the ground.

Staging a living wage campaign at the local level is considered one of the best methods for increasing wages, membership, and community awareness. "The ultimate outcome is to build a strong local and state Association," says Bill Raabe, NEA director of Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy. "A living wage campaign not only raises salaries, but builds pride and instills a sense of camaraderie among ESPs." Raabe suggests that a living wage campaign include the following components:

DETERMINE a living wage figure for your location (local researchers, and UniServ directors can help). Also, the Economic Policy Institute offers a formula to tabulate a wage figure. Go to www.epinet.org, click on "online calculators," then "basic family budget calculator."

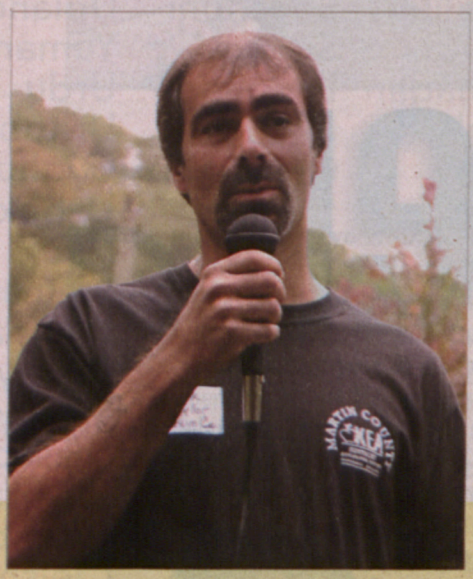
INSPIRE members to believe they deserve a fair wage for the work they do.

DETERMINE a strategy that taps member strengths (some enjoy recruiting and interacting with community leaders, while others prefer to work behind the scenes).

EDUCATE community organizations (labor, faith-based, parent) and other allies about the issue.

resulted in 280 new members being recruited in only a month's time. The purpose of the October 8 rally was twofold: To bring Association members together with non-member ESPs, and to increase public awareness regarding the low wages and poor benefits paid to ESPs.

The rally, which included a pig roast with barbecue chicken and side dishes prepared by volunteers, was held at Wiley Lake State Park. And despite the inclement weather, approximately 165 turned out for the cause.



(Above) The crowd at Kentucky's living wage rally included old and new Association members from five counties. (Far left) Bus driver/secretary **Sherry Castle**, a KEA area rep, helped organize the event. (Left) Maintenance employee **Rick Taylor** addressed the low wages and poor benefits paid to the state's 42,000 ESPs.

RECRUIT new members and help them understand the value they bring collectively to schools and the Association.

Tap Into NEA Resources

To learn more about the living wage issue (and why it's a critical component to compensation enhancement), contact Dave Winans, NEA Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy, at 202-822-7234 or dwinans@nea.org. NEA.org also offers a wealth of information and research on teacher and ESP pay issues, including news stories on recent, successful living wage campaigns. To access, go to www.nea.org/pay/index.html.

Richard Stonestreet, a labor leader and the event's keynote speaker, discussed what is meant by a "living wage." In a nutshell, a living wage can be considered the minimum hourly wage a person needs to pay for life's basic necessities without relying on family, government, or public assistance. How is that determined? The Department of Health and Human Services compiles living wage figures, using an economic formula applied to an area's cost of food, housing, transportation, utilities, childcare, healthcare, and taxes. The premise behind living wage campaigns is that people who work a full-time job should not live in poverty.

But that premise clearly doesn't hold true for many KEA ESPs. The Taylor family's household income, for example, is well below the $25,386 considered necessary to meet living expenses in the state, and they rank below the national poverty level of $19,307 for a family their size.

Many ESPs in Kentucky are skilled workers like Taylor, who must supplement their school income by working two and three jobs. Kentucky has about 42,000 ESPs, with approximately 65 percent earning less than $15,000 annually. While some ESPs have working spouses to supplement their income, a full 35 percent consider themselves heads of household, according to a KEA survey.

"Our school board could not contract any local electrician, roofer, carpenter, or mechanic for $8.56 an hour," says Taylor, who routinely repairs plumbing and electrical fixtures in the district's aging schools. "Board members should recognize how much they save by having me make repairs."

WEB EXCLUSIVE

What does a living wage victory "look" like? Go to www.neatoday.org to see what Ithaca, New York's ESP members are shouting about!

In a recent study by NEA, Kentucky ESPs ranked 44th in the nation, earning an average of $16,489, which is more than $4,500 behind the U.S. average of $21,018. By comparison, ESPs in nearby Illinois make, on average, $22,441 and support professionals in West Virginia make $20,224.

In early 2006, KEA officials plan to ask school trustees for a new contract. The recent surge in membership (including an additional 21 members who joined at the rally) will certainly give leverage to KEA officials at upcoming school board meetings. "We believe that in a few years, every school employee should be at or above the federal minimum poverty level," says transportation secretary and bus driver Sherry Castle, who is also a KESPA board member. nea

—JOHN ROSALES

More ESP stories in this issue:

- Gulf Coast ESPs stay in touch via listserv – *Page 13*
- Georgia ESPs hold their first conference – *Page 21*
- GPS technology on school buses – *Page 44*
- A bus driver saves a girl from a pit bull attack – *Page 50*

PHOTOS: GUILLERMO CUENCA

Marie-Cécile

Language Can't Be A Barrier

Guillermo

Vladimir

Here are practical ways to reach students when they speak what you don't.

Nguyet

PHOTOS: NATHAN HAM

Nora Brent, a first-grade teacher in Falls Church, Virginia, is surrounded by children from all over the world. Teaching them to read is a challenge—many don't speak English well—but Brent frequently reminds them, "We're getting better and better at this!"

BY MARY ELLEN FLANNERY

David spent two months in a Northern Virginia kindergarten classroom last year, arriving from Bolivia just as the local cherry trees burst into famous bloom. He didn't speak a word the entire time. But this year, in his first-grade classroom at Bailey's Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences, located just a few miles from the White House and a few blocks from the corner convenience store where Bailey's Salvadoran fathers wait for day laborer gigs, David is blossoming, too.

"Apple green, apple red, an apple fell on David's head!" What a silly song, says first-grade teacher Nora Brent, as she glides a wooden pointer under each colored word on her upright easel. Would Josseline like a turn? Why, yes, she would. Would Monica? Of course! And José? And David?

Yes!

In Brent's classroom, about 80 percent of her first-graders are learning English as a second language. Their parents come from all over the world—from Syria to El Salvador—seeking something a little better for their children. They find it at Bailey's, where support for English-language learners (ELLs) and their teachers is institutionally strong. (Ahem, there are all of 13 children in Brent's class, and she has more than 10 ELL specialists on campus to call on.)

But there are students like David all over the country, often in places you might not expect to find them, from the rugged blue mountains of North Carolina to the apple valleys of southern Idaho, and their numbers are multiplying daily. According to the U.S. Department of Education, more than 5 million ELLs were enrolled in public schools in 2003—about 1 in every 10 students. That's a greater than 65 percent jump since 1993. By far, most are Spanish-speakers, but they also come from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and every other corner of the globe.

"Classrooms that have rarely seen these students are now needing to address the opportunity that this diversity brings," said Rufina Hernández, director of NEA Human and Civil Rights.

If you don't yet have a David, sitting silently as his English-speaking classmates line up for lunch, chances are that one day you will. And, more likely than not, you won't be ready for him. Just 12.5 percent of teachers with English learners in their classrooms have participated in a scant day's worth of ELL-related training during the past three years, according to a National Center for Education Statistics survey. And it's not because they don't want to—the training often isn't available, particularly in rural or otherwise isolated districts.

But with just 27 percent of teachers saying they feel "very

PHOTO: DANNY PECK

well prepared" to teach English learners, according to the same survey, it's not surprising these students often struggle. In 2001, of the states that tested ELLs in reading comprehension, only 18.7 percent were assessed at being at or above the norm.

While no one is happy with those results, educators' frustration can be palpable. "I remember one teacher just venting all over me, 'Take this kid out of my class and bring him back when he knows English!'" recalls Patricia Majors, a nationally certified ELL teacher in Charleston, South Carolina. "Basically, she cared about him...but she just didn't know what to do."

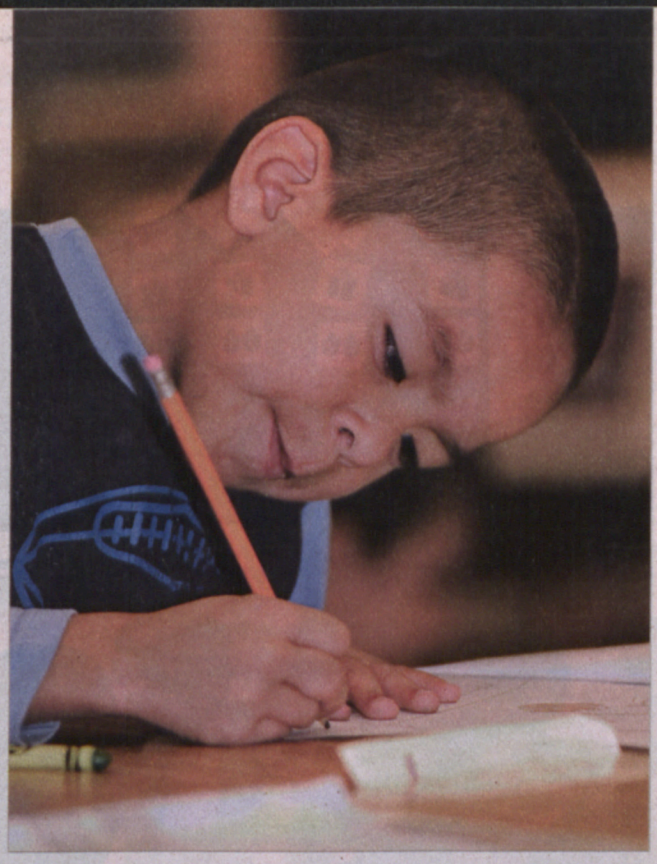
So there is the problem. A whole lot of kids who don't speak English fluently, and way too few mainstream teachers who are prepared to work with them. (And don't forget to factor in the No Child Left Behind law, which demands that your English learners get up to speed—and quick.)

It sounds impossible, doesn't it? But there are solutions. "The NEA believes strongly that our members can build on the assets these children bring," Hernández said. And, while the NEA works with other organizations to address national policies, you can make it work in your classroom.

Many of your colleagues, especially those specializing in English-language learners, have plenty of good advice and strategies to help you open the lines of communication.

A WELCOMING CLASSROOM

One simple way to start connecting with your students who don't speak English is to put yourself in their shoes. Their common predicament was brought to life for Marcie Burlett, a third-grade teacher at Upward Elementary in Fletcher, North Carolina, during a recent workshop. In one exercise, participants sat and listened to a woman speaking Korean for 20 minutes. Sat, and sat, and sat. "I was so bored," she sighs.



Learn about your kids: "That empathy, that excitement, that caring," will inform your teaching, says ELL specialist **Wendy Hammerstone**.

Yes, it is frustrating to have a student who doesn't understand you—especially if you have 37 other kids, little specific ELL training, and limited school-wide support for working with that child. But, like Marcie Burlett, imagine what it's like for him.

That's why, before the first "Good Morning" comes out of

NCLB and ELLs: A Quiz!

We know there's not enough testing in your life. (Oh, what a good joke!) Find out what you know—and still need to learn—about the so-called No Child Left Behind law and your English-language learners.

1. Are ELL students exempt from testing?

a) Of course they are! They don't speak English!
b) Maybe math, but definitely not reading.
c) Maybe reading, but definitely not math.
d) Ha, ha, ha! Nobody escapes NCLB.

2. How many assessments must your ELL take each year?

a) None. They don't speak English!
b) One—to find out how much English they speak.
c) At least three—reading, math, and English-language proficiency.
d) About 180—one for each day of school.

3. Can they take the tests in their native language?

a) Of course! How else will they understand the questions?
b) Yes, but only if it's Spanish.
c) It depends on your state.
d) Absolutely not. Everybody else is taking it in English.

4. Do their scores count toward my school's performance?

a) No. That wouldn't make sense.
b) Yes, after their first year in the country.
c) Yes, after five to seven years—that's how long it takes to learn English.
d) From day one, baby!

THE ANSWERS:

1) C. During their first year of enrollment, a state may exempt ELLs from taking the reading test. However, they are required to take math—even if it's their first day in the country.

2) C. English learners must take the same assessments required of other kids—reading and math (and soon science) — in grades 3-8 and once in high school. Plus, all ELLs in every grade are assessed annually in language proficiency — reading, writing, speaking, listening, and comprehension.

3) C. States are required to develop native language assessments "to the extent practicable," so one may not exist. But after three consecutive years here, all ELLs are required to take the reading test in English, although the deadline can be extended by two years on a case-by-case basis.

4) B. States can include scores from the first year, but they're not required to. (However, the number of ELLs taking the tests does count toward the required 95 percent participation rate.) After the first year, ELL scores are counted for AYP regardless of whether they're tested in their native language.

Beyond Practice and Drill

Easy, high-tech ways to help your students master the English language.

Computer Pen Pals

Before launching his award-winning Web site, "Dave's ESL Café," (www.eslcafe.com), Dave Sperling, author of *The Internet Guide for English Language Teachers*, struggled to motivate his ELL students to write. It was 1995 and the Internet was about to boom when Sperling decided to go digital. Armed with a book of HTML code and a $99 digital camera, he gathered personal essays and digital

photos of his class and posted them on the Web with e-mail addresses for his students. "A month later, they were receiving messages from students around the world," Sperling says. "Soon they were motivated to read, write, and communicate online every day."

Now known as "key pals," millions of English-language learners connect with peers via e-mail as a way to practice reading and writing in English.

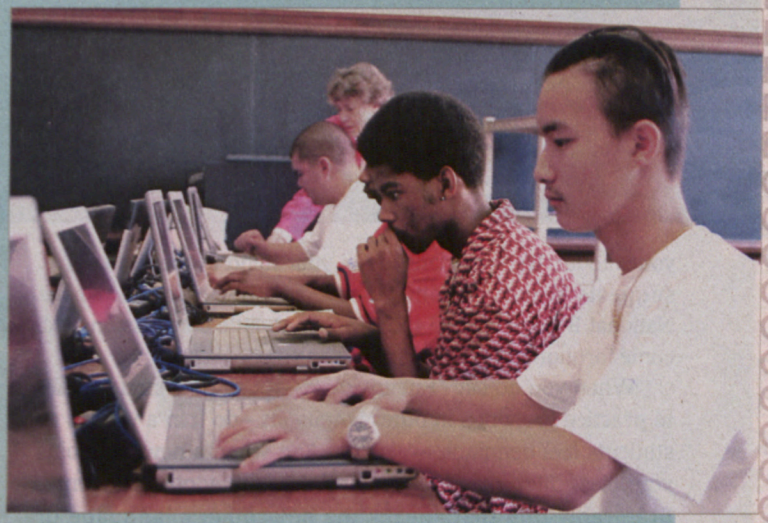
How can this strategy help your ELLs? Sperling suggests integrating a key pal project with what is being taught in class. "If your lesson is on food from a particular region, ask students to write to their key pals about that type of food," he advises. "Then they can read messages aloud in class and work on pronunciation."

While pairing students with key pals has advantages, it may not be the best strategy for those just beginning to study English, cautions Frank Hernandez, ELL Unit Program advisor at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, especially when outgoing messages aren't reviewed by an instructor. "Writing with mistakes early on without correction can lead to poor writing skills, since those mistakes can become entrenched," he says.

As a supplement to classroom instruction, Hernandez recommends a host of ELL Web sites designed to help students develop reading, writing, vocabulary, and pronunciation skills with guided practice. Sites range from dictionaries—such as www.pdictionary.com, where images accompany definitions to help students construct meaning to vocabulary words—to more advanced sites like www.mylanguageexchange.com, where students can practice speaking and listening with voice chat as well as reading and writing with text chat.

A lesson plan that sings!

For Gil Vega, NEA member and English Language Development Site monitor at Eric Birch High School in Fontana, California, the Internet isn't always an option. "We're just beginning to get laptops at school, and most of our students don't have Internet access at home," Vega says.



But that hasn't stopped him from putting together engaging multimedia lesson plans using technology such as SMART Boards (www.smartech.com) and streaming video, which he downloads from an educational digital video library at www.unitedstreaming.com. With an animated, 13-minute segment on the War of 1812 (including a performance of "The Star-Spangled Banner" by Aretha Franklin), Vega kept his class enthralled during a lesson about the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem.

With a lesson designed to develop reading, comprehension, and vocabulary skills, Vega used the multimedia presentation to enhance traditional teaching methods. "I took key words from the presentation and asked kids to look them up," Vega says. "They then had to write essays on what the anthem and pledge meant to them and to society as a whole."

But even though Vega's more interactive lessons elicit "oohs" and "aaahhs" from students, he insists that technology is merely a tool. "The main ingredient is the teacher," Vega says. "Nothing can replace that."

—CINDY LONG

FIND IT

For more information on locating key pals for your students, a list of useful ELL Web sites, and tips for accessing educational video streams, visit www.neatoday.org.

PHOTOS FACING PAGE: DANNY PECK; ABOVE: NATHAN HAM

your mouth, it's important to get your mind in the right place, suggests Wendy Hammerstone, another North Carolina National Board-certified ELL teacher. A little compassion "will come through in your teaching," she says.

When you do say "Buenos días"—it can be a kind gesture to practice greetings in other languages—do it in a way so all students feel genuinely welcome. And when a new ELL joins your class, first introduce her and then ask another student—preferably one that speaks the newcomer's language or another friendly, responsible peer—to be a special buddy.

MODIFY LESSONS

You probably have students who can't remember a word you say unless they also see it on paper; some who can't focus for five minutes; and others who delight you with their vocabulary, but depress you with their lack of math skills. You deal with their varying levels of ability on a daily basis.

A lack of proficiency in English is a curveball, to be sure, but in a certain way, it's not that different from dealing with other challenges. Good teachers regularly modify lessons for different learners, and you'll need to do the same for your ELLs, notes Patricia Majors.

Last year, as Thanksgiving approached, Karen Christenson's Burley (Idaho) High School 10th-graders were reading George Orwell's satiric novel, *Animal Farm*, and working on projects that showed their comprehension. Some riffed fluently on Orwellian themes in long dramatic essays—while others, still fresh from the isolated valleys of southern Mexico, did more visual presentations. One new English learner was making a model of the farm and connecting parts of it to significant quotations from the book. By not forcing a "one size fits all" approach, each student was able to learn in a meaningful way, at his or her own level.

When teaching your ELLs, think different assignments, different assessments, and different presentations of the material. Christenson pulls out key vocabulary words and makes sure her Spanish speakers understand them first in Spanish, then English. (This is easier when bilingual students

Tips for Teaching

Specialist Kathleen Fay, co-author of *Becoming One Community: Reading and Writing with English Language Learners*, offers five ways to help bring your students up to speed:

1. CREATE opportunities for conversation. For example, pause during read aloud, after solving a math problem, or before a writing exercise, and encourage students to talk about the lesson or assignment. If other students in the class speak the same native language, they may choose to pair off and speak in either language. This gives children the opportunity to check understanding or share thoughts with less risk than speaking out to the whole group. Buddy reading provides another great way to encourage productive chatter between peers.

2. HONOR the languages represented in your classroom. Ask students to teach greetings to the class and incorporate them into your morning rituals. Have the class learn how to count to five or say "Happy Birthday." When students feel their native languages are valued, and you have taken the risk to learn a little about their culture, it establishes trust.

3. FIND opportunities to use English authentically. Students could write a letter to the principal asking about a school rule; read a book aloud to younger students; figure out how many school lunches need to be ordered for the third-grade field trip. Practicing the English language in a meaningful context will make it easier for students to understand you during lessons.

4. POST your class schedule each day. A predictable routine is easier to follow. When students know what is coming—every day they'll write stories at 2 p.m.—they will be better prepared to participate. You might also add photographs or sketches next to tasks on the schedule to aid comprehension.

5. DON'T feel you must correct every grammatical mistake. Students could become discouraged if they are constantly corrected. Accept approximations and respond to the meaning behind the comment. It takes time to become fluent in a second language, and approximations are a natural part of language development.

are able to help—less so, if your student is the school's lone Estonian.)

Christenson also provides key information in writing on the board, where it's less likely they'll misunderstand it (some students find it easier to read a new language before they can hear and comprehend it). In addition, she works on giving her students opportunities to talk to each other, usually in small groups, which can be less intimidating than discussions involving the entire class.

Of course, all of these individualized lessons require "a lot of work," says Christenson—who also stays after school to tutor her English learners. "They're good kids. They want to learn and they're very cooperative, but it's an enormous task. There's a limit on the time that you have to modify lessons."

Make sure your administrators—and union representatives—are aware of just how much time you spend on these tasks. When it comes time to distribute resources to schools each year, your testimony can be used to prove the need for new or additional staffing.

SEE IT, SAY IT

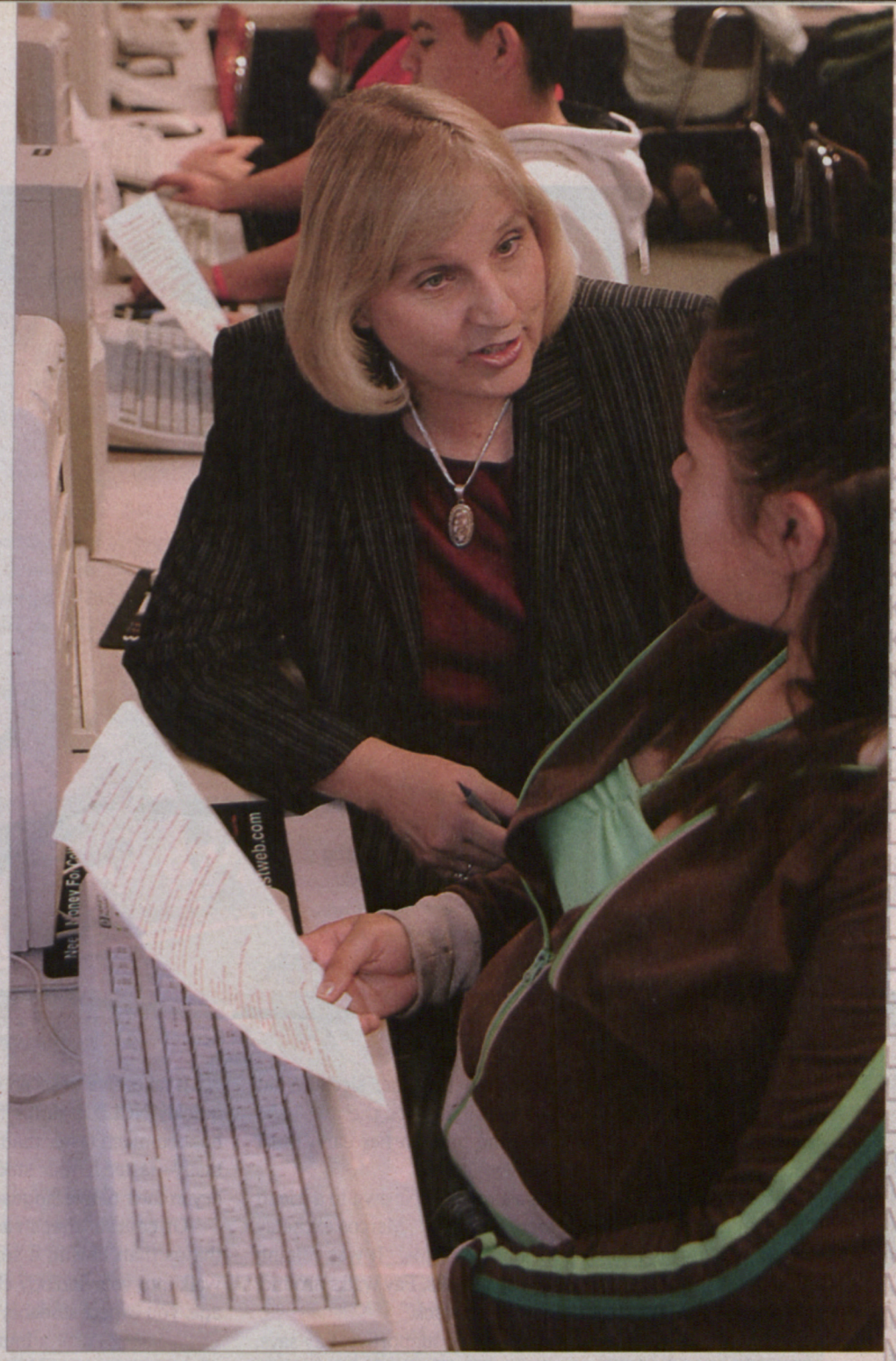
Check out Nora Brent's silly apples song again—"Apple green, apple red, an apple fell on David's head." When she hands a copy of her home-made book to David, he reads the first two words fluently, taking hints from the color of the ink and the fruit drawn to the side. Then he stops abruptly at "red."

"Tell me in Spanish, what color is this?" she asks.

"Rojo," David answers.

"Let's take our magic tape and write rojo, and you can say that," she says, as she covers up the word "red" with white tape and writes rojo on it. (Don't be afraid to use a student's native language, our specialists say: Often students have extensive vocabulary in a native language, which can be used to aid comprehension. Eventually, they will learn to match English to Spanish, or Russian, or Korean.)

Brent and David continue, and he pauses again on the last line: "An apple fell on David's head." What's this word? Next to the text, Brent draws a little picture of a tousled head next to those final four confusing letters and touches his black hair.



Customizing lessons is "an enormous task," acknowledges **Karen Christenson** of Burley High School in Idaho.

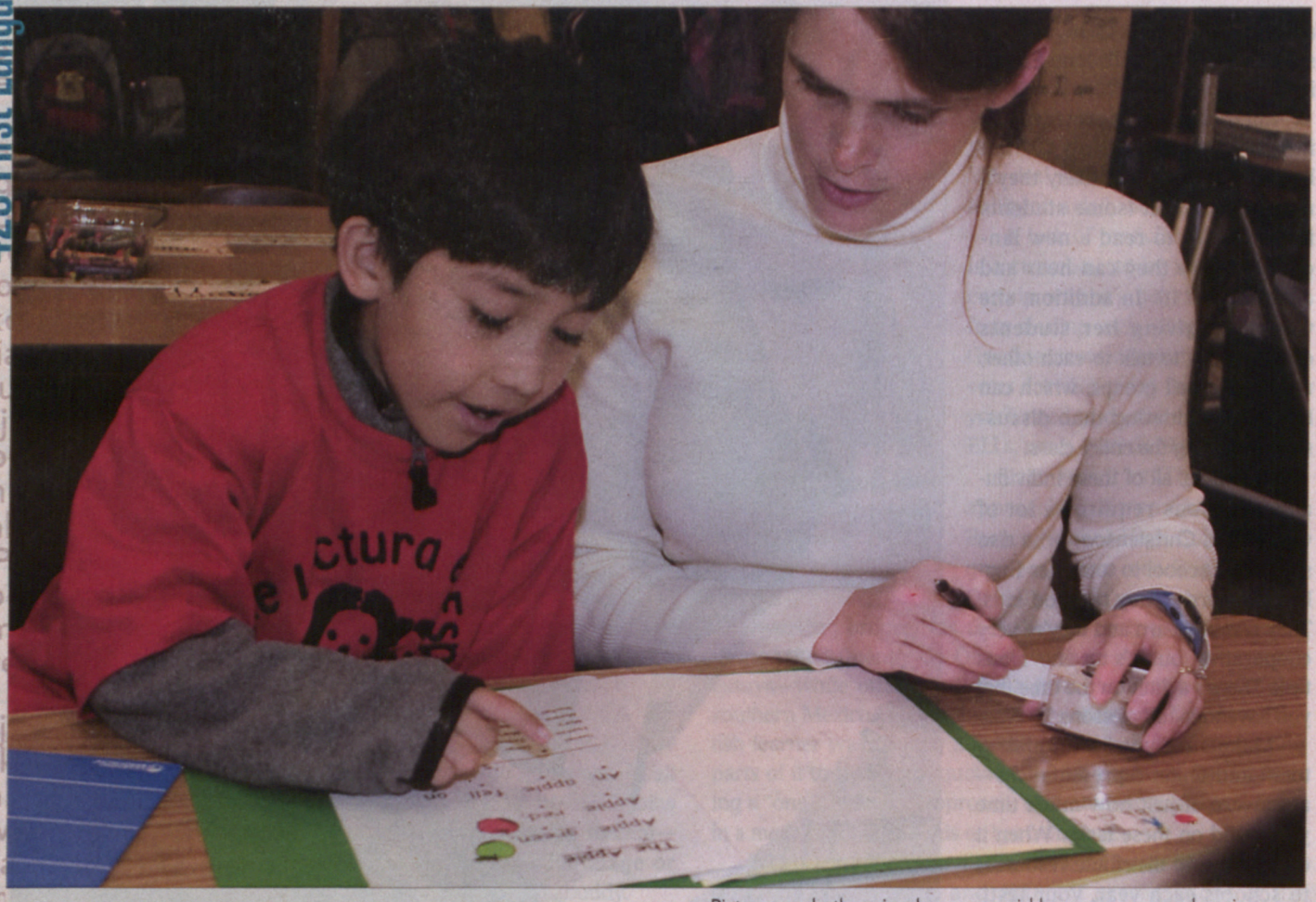
"Head!" he exclaims.

"Did the picture help you?" Brent asks, and he nods. "Readers use pictures to help them sometimes, so it was smart of you to look at the picture for help."

And it was smart of Brent to draw them into her book. Teachers use all kinds of strategies to reach their students, and visual hints can be especially useful, says her colleague Kathleen Fay, co-author of *Becoming One Community: Reading and Writing with English-Language Learners*.

In her own workshop with a class of kindergartners at the Bailey school, Fay gathers them on the floor in a lumpy, touchy-feely group of denim knees and hair braids, and tells a story

PHOTOS, FACING PAGE AND ABOVE: ASHLEY SMITH



Pictures and other visual cues can aid language comprehension.

about the strange noise that woke her from her sleep. What was making the strange noise? "I couldn't see the owl," she says, pointing to her eyes. Then she tugs on her ear: "But I could hear the owl."

Fay urges the children to tell a story of their own to a friend and then draw it, too. "There were monkeys!" Marcos excitedly tells his buddy, as nearby Sabrina complains, "It was raining really hard and I couldn't sleep!" Meanwhile, Fay walks around, helping students get started and stay on track.

This kind of workshop setting is very supportive, Fay says. "There's a little time to teach directly, and then they go off to work where you can offer one-on-one help." Plus, when kids are sharing, they're talking. And even if you suspect that they're chatting about toys or clothes, it doesn't matter—talking about anything still leads to language acquisition.

IT'S ALL GOOD

If there's one thing Vicky Goodman wants her mainstream colleagues to do, it's this: "I tell people to just relax," says Goodman, a National Board-certified ELL teacher in western North Carolina.

It takes five to seven years to learn English. No matter how quickly NCLB asks for test results, you simply can't make it happen much faster than that. A new language will come eventually—faster if your students have a good foundation of literacy in their native language.

Of course, that's easy to say—there's not many scarier things than having a sophomore who doesn't speak English walk into your biology class (except perhaps a junior!). At that age, you expect students not only to speak English, but to have a foundation of academic knowledge, especially in content areas like science and history.

But try not to get discouraged, and take a final tip from one of Bailey Elementary's fifth-graders, who knows something about enjoying the journey: José is working on a map of his home in El Salvador—a prelude to writing a story about it. In America, he says, roads are straight and smooth. "In my country, instead of a road that is straight, there are a lot of rocks and it's bumpy—but it's good," he says.

Kind of like the road he's on right now. nea

Video Wish you could sit in on Kathleen Fay's classroom? Well, you can! To watch our specialist at work, go to www.neatoday.org.

Resources Lesson plans, multilingual materials, online dictionaries, and an ELL slide show can be found at www.neatoday.org.

On the Web!

PHOTO: DANNY PECK

Entering stage left, the English-Language Learner

Theater workshops require students to try on facial expressions, use body language, and talk, talk, talk.

When he begins his 10-day drama workshops, Daniel Kelin, director of the Honolulu Theater for Youth, doesn't hear much from the English-language learners. But by the end they're giggling, running from role to role, urging each other to "open your mouth like fish," and acting out Pacific Island stories about the sea and its magic men. Even more impressive, the students are able to narrate their own stories, using the English language in a purposeful new way and growing in confidence in themselves.

"It was awesome," said Jennifer Wolf-Moon, whose English-language learners at Kealakeh High School have attended annual workshops with Kelin for the past three years. "When you put them in a drama situation, it gives them an opportunity to express themselves in a different way."

Often, success with English-language learners depends on giving them frequent opportunities to talk, especially in genuine ways—practice makes perfect, after all. Drama provides that opportunity, and makes it easier by providing physical cues to language. There are props, body movements, and voice inflections—all of which assist in comprehension.

"In the beginning, we talk about ways we communicate, both verbally and physically," says Kelin. "I'm not trying to teach them directly to use language. I'm trying to set them up in situations where they have to learn language."

Kelin starts off with a few exercises to get their bodies moving. "What are the things people do at the beach?" he asks. And, because this is Hawaii, after all, he quickly offers a qualifier: "What we don't want is, 'I want to go surfing!'" from 10 different students.

The students' answers, first spoken aloud, come to life through thoughtful actions. Here is a lone surfer, balancing precariously on a killer wave; over here, a shell-seeker, stopping to pick up a treasure; and down the beach, there's a surf-caster, sensibly casting his hook far from the surfer.

The English-language learners on Hawaii's Big Island, where Kelin regularly works with students of all ages, come mostly from the Philippines and other Pacific islands, like the Marshall Islands and Micronesia, but also from Mexico. Many Hispanic parents work on the famous Kona coffee plantations. Overall, ELLs represent about 10 percent of the total student population on Hawaii. As on the mainland, their numbers are growing, says Precille Boisvert, a state Department of Education ESL resource teacher. Also mimicking mainland trends, they arrive with varying degrees of English.

The beauty of the drama program is that it doesn't matter how much English they have, Boisvert says. "They can respond with the limited language they have, with a text that is more normal, more natural."

Getting students to the point where they can narrate their own stories, using oral and physical representation, is a gradual process. After creating a beach "tableau" and trying on different physical roles, the students listen intently to Kelin's tales of island myths and build more dramatic skills.

Toward the end of one of his workshops, he nods toward a few reluctant actors and says, "Everybody in this room has to talk today. Francie, Clarence. You have to play a character and your character has to talk."

And the thing is, they do.

Action! Students in **Daniel Kelin's** drama workshops first turn themselves into statues, then bring their characters to life using the English language.

PHOTOS: PACIFIC RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING

How Can We Help Kids Stay in School?

Educators find one-on-one attention in any grade is key to helping at-risk students get their diplomas.

BY ALAIN JEHLEN

At the beginning of the year, one of Wendy Fujitani's ninth-grade students at Waianae High in Hawaii didn't come to school at all. "He was 16, tall and athletic, and he wanted to play football, but he had no desire to come in, pass his classes, and be able to play," she recalls. "I called him weekly; the counselor did a home visit. I don't think his Mom had finished high school so he had no push from home. We had to threaten to go to court. Finally, after a month, he started showing up, and then the other kids started pushing him."

Now he attends school regularly, and Fujitani believes he'll stay the course and get his high school diploma. If so, he'll have done better than many other students in danger of dropping out.

The high school dropout problem is not going away. School districts often report dropout rates in ways that make them look good, but when statisticians take off the rose-colored glasses, they find that the percentage of students who don't graduate remains stubbornly high.

"THERE ARE MANY PLACES along a child's school career—from kindergarten through high school—where educators can step in and boost that child's chances of graduating."

A recent study by Education Testing Service (ETS) found the percentage of graduates peaked at 77 percent in 1969, then slid to 69 percent in 2001. Using a different statistical approach, the U.S. Department of Education reported 73 percent graduated in 2002 and 74 percent in 2003.

The problem is worse among low-income, minority youth—about half of African-American and Hispanic students earn diplomas, compared with three-quarters of White students, reports the Harvard Civil Rights Project.

Many educators believe that the pressure for higher test scores in the so-called No Child Left Behind law is leading schools to push low scorers out, or at least not try to keep them in. Ironically, more children will be left behind.

Waianae High School teacher **Wendy Fujitani** is also a Waianae graduate.

And these kids will face a growing income penalty. ETS looked at the average income of 25- to 34-year-old male dropouts over a 30-year period (1971–02), comparing it with high school graduates and those who got college degrees. All three groups suffered declines in earnings, but dropouts took the hardest hit: Their average income fell by 35 percent.

PROGRAMS THAT WORK

What to do? Research suggests there are many places along a child's school career—from kindergarten through high school—where educators can step in and boost that child's chances of graduating. A recent follow-up of students in a landmark 1980s study on class size in Tennessee showed that students who had small classes (13 to 17 students) in kindergarten through fourth grade were 11 percent more likely to graduate from high school than those in classes with 22 to 26 students. The benefit was greatest for low-income children: They were twice as likely to graduate if they had small classes in the primary grades.

Elementary school is certainly not the last opportunity to help students get that diploma, however. Waianae High School, a low-income school outside Honolulu, is using a model called Talent Development High School (www.csos.jhu.edu/tdhs), developed 11 years ago by educators at Johns Hopkins University in partnership with Philadelphia high schools with low promotion and attendance rates. The program focuses on ninth grade, a time when adolescents are typically plopped into oversized, confusing, tumultuous high schools—and can easily get lost, if no one is paying attention.

But program participants, like Waianae freshmen, get plenty of attention. The 90 students are divided into self-contained groups of three classes. Each group shares three major subject teachers for math, reading, and social studies. All three are in adjacent rooms—no hiking through a giant building looking for the next class. Students take just four classes a day, each

about 85 minutes long, instead of the old system of six shorter classes. Ninth-graders are housed apart from the rest of the school, even eating lunch in a separate cafeteria.

"At first, they don't like to be separated," says Kathy Yamamoto, a social studies teacher and team leader at Waianae. "They want to intermingle with the upper grades. The girls want to be with older boys. But by second quarter, they become a unified group. They become protective of each other. Even when they get to 10th and 11th grade, they still hang out together."

Wendy Fujitani, who teaches English, graduated from Waianae herself. When she went there, "I felt I had so many things to do, so many classes to go to, and not enough time to learn anything," she says. "Today, you know they care about you and expect more from you—it's a place to get an education, not just a place to be."

It's three on one when Waianae teachers talk with a student (second from right) about her work.

In part, the difference is simple arithmetic: Three teachers with 90 students can keep track of each student a lot better than one teacher with 180. That's why Fujitani was able to focus on her truant football player. Often, all three teachers telephone a parent together, using their common planning time.

Many teachers in Talent Development schools say discipline is much improved. Yamamoto, however, never had much of a problem even before the shift: "I'm kind of a witch," she explains.

Is there a down side? The program involves heterogeneous grouping, which meant no more honors track. "We have differentiated instruction, but sometimes I wonder if the kids who would have been in honors are getting enough," says Yamamoto.

For teachers, one disadvantage is less variety in the students and material they teach. In the past, many taught some ninth-grade students and some juniors or seniors. Now, they have all ninth-graders or all older students.

How are the kids faring? A long-term study of the first Talent Development schools found that students had better attendance and earned more credits than similar students in a control group, and about 8 percent more of them graduated on time. Talent Development wasn't able to erase the effects of poverty and close the achievement gap completely, but it did seem to help. Now Talent Development is being tried in 85 schools in 20 states.

A SECOND CHANCE

While Talent Development's main focus is on ninth graders, other programs concentrate on older students, even trying to to reel in those who have already dropped out. Seattle is one of some 30 cities with Middle College High Schools (www.laguardia.edu/mcnc/). Located on college campuses, these alternative schools, geared to 16- to 20-year-olds, offer a fresh start and a bridge to higher education for dropouts and students who are not doing well in high school.

Alonzo Ybarra coordinates the program on the South Seattle Community College campus. He and three other teachers work with about 110 students, 15 to 20 percent of whom are former dropouts. "They may come here because McDonald's doesn't pay well enough," he explains. "And we'll take a chance with them, although we're not lowering the academic standards."

Other students are not dropouts, but felt they needed a different environment to finish high school. Ybarra himself was one of those students. In his regular high school, he had poor grades and "there was a heavy presence of drugs, alcohol, and violence," he recalls. "I did not take myself seriously as a student." So in his senior year, he transferred to South Seattle, where he found a more mature environment and turned his life around. He got his diploma, earned two college credits at the same time, then went on to college and a Master's degree.

The high standards of these programs are just what many students need—teachers take them seriously and the college atmosphere tells them that here, they are respected. Still, Ybarra says the school often loses a fifth of its students per quarter—mostly because of family crises and other personal issues. What is impressive, though, is that about 40 graduate each year.

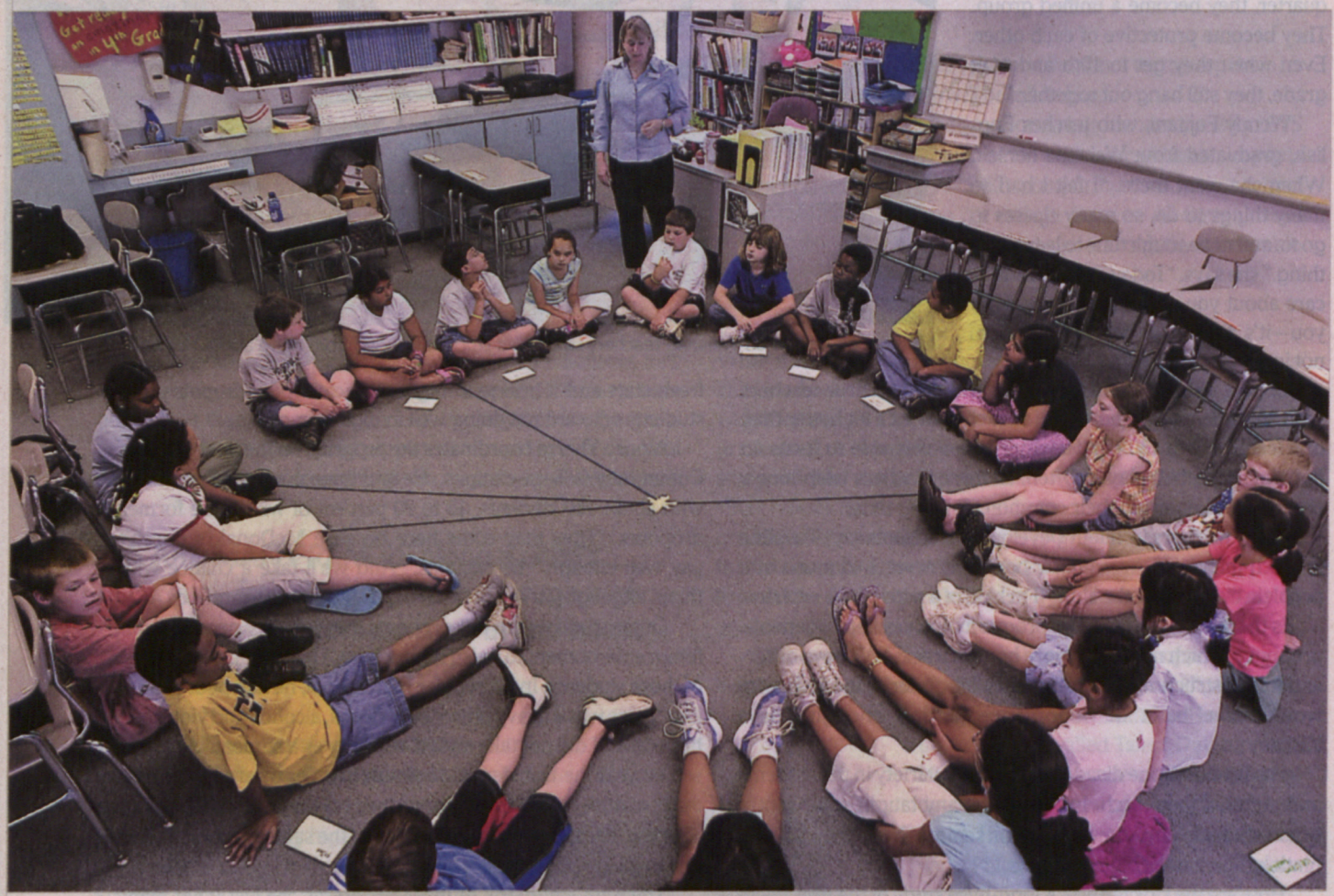
HARD WORK PAYS OFF

Keeping those potential dropouts in school can happen, but to be successful requires—as usual—lots of personal attention from the educator and hard work from both teacher and student. "I'm more emotionally exhausted now," says Waianae teacher Kathy Yamamoto. "I put a lot more time and effort into my kids' personal lives because I find out what goes on. But the rewards for me are much greater too." nea

PHOTOS: RAY TANAKA

beautiful mir

An innovative math program helps change the face of gifted and talented education.



Alison Foley taps her gifted students' math potential, including **Courtney** (facing page, top left) and **Trey** (facing page, top right).

BY JOHN O'NEIL

"Friendly fractions" are the day's topic, but Alison Foley's 20 fourth-graders can't dig into that concept until they've tallied and graphed their favorite desserts. Votes for ice cream, brownies, cake, and cookies—even a lone vote for cannoli—go up on the board.

"What about ice cream cake?" one student asks. "If we were doing a Venn diagram, we could put that in the intersection," Courtney offers. Soon, desks and chairs are pulled aside and Foley's kids use yarn and their bodies to make a human pie chart illustrating their data, then go on to calculate what fractions result when you add various categories together.

Foley's math curriculum—which presents concepts several years above grade level—isn't the only thing unusual about her classroom at Smith School in West Hartford, Connecticut. Smith is one of 10 schools in Connecticut and Kentucky piloting an innovative project, Mentoring Mathematical Minds (Project M^3), aimed at identifying children in grades 3–5 capable of handling advanced mathematics. Developed at the University of Connecticut, the program is designed to expand the population of students typically served by gifted and talented programs. Sure enough, look around Foley's classroom—which draws students from Section 8 housing as well as million-dollar homes—and

PHOTOS: JONATHAN OLSON

nds

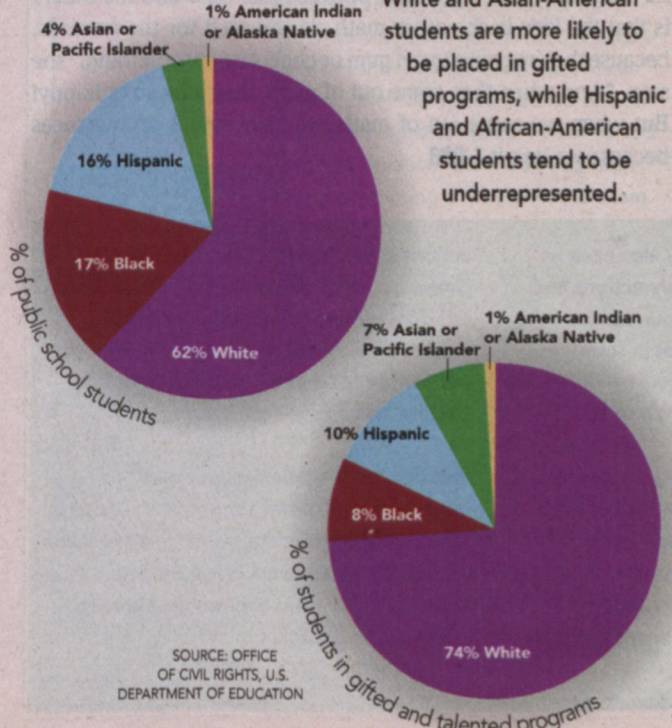
you'll see students as diverse as their favorite desserts, with Black students elbow to elbow with Hispanic, Asian-American, and White pupils.

National figures on gifted education programs suggest such diversity is unusual. Data collected by the Education Department's Office of Civil Rights show that White and Asian students are typically overrepresented among programs for the gifted, while other minorities tend to be underrepresented.

The University of Connecticut project is part of a movement to broaden the scope of gifted and talented programs, which in some communities are fighting for survival. Some advocates for gifted programs say the federal so-called No Child Left Behind law (NCLB), which mandates that schools raise all students' performance to minimally acceptable standards, has school officials focused on average or underachieving learners.

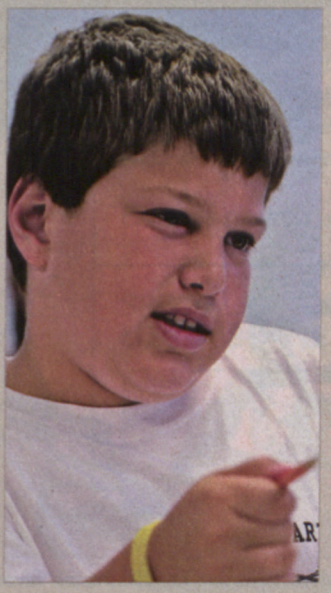
WHO GETS IN?

White and Asian-American students are more likely to be placed in gifted programs, while Hispanic and African-American students tend to be underrepresented.



SOURCE: OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

"Teachers who used to teach AP are now teaching remedial reading instead," notes Jane Clarenbach, director of public education and affiliate relations for the National Association for Gifted Children. More bad news: President Bush has proposed eliminating federal Jacob Javits grants, which support research on gifted education (including programs like Project M^3).



While research consistently shows the advantages of offering gifted students content tailored to their needs, many buy into the notion that it's not necessary—they say gifted kids will do just fine, even without special curricula. Indeed, with NCLB pressures mounting and district budgets tight, some see gifted programs as offering extra resources to kids who already have all the advantages.

But Clarenbach and others argue that forcing gifted students to march in lockstep with their peers holds them back. Nine-year-old Courtney would probably agree. She spent part of last year in Smith School's regular third-grade math class, and part of the year receiving Project M^3's enriched curriculum. Looking back at her grade-level math work, Courtney recalls, "I'd just zip through it in five minutes and have to wait half an hour for everyone to finish. It gave me headaches when I had to do the same things over and over again, honestly."

Clarenbach points out that the issue can be further complicated because the gifted population itself is diverse. For example, some gifted students excel in a single content area but are weak in others; some even have learning disabilities. Still, that doesn't mean areas of strength should be ignored. Project M^3 Director Kathy Gavin, who works at the

Neag Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development at the University of Connecticut, cites the example of one student who was almost held back in second grade because of reading difficulties, but who it was thought could benefit from the M^3 program. The student was placed in it and "has excelled," she says.

Mariam displays her knowledge of fractions and her classmates' favorite desserts.

BROADENING THE POOL

Without a special math program like Project M^3, the talents of children like Courtney, a vivacious African-American who has already mapped out her life's goals, might go unchallenged. Kathy Gavin says she's met an urban principal who told her flat-out, "I don't have any gifted kids in my school." But Project M^3 helps find them. Kids are selected based on multiple criteria, including a special assessment of nonverbal math ability, which measures such things as spatial sense and reasoning, and standardized tests when available. Teacher recommendations and prior grades also factor in. Opening up the selection process (gifted programs in the past often selected students based on IQ scores alone) has allowed students with less obvious talents to benefit, says Gavin. Once they're in, kids take four units of about six weeks each, with content pitched several years beyond grade-level standard: the fourth-graders in Foley's class, for example, studied a unit on algebra in which they solved for variables. The lessons focus on conceptual understanding, with lots of time for reflection and discussion.

Early results show that the program has promise. Students taking the M^3 curriculum at the 10 schools where the program is being piloted have posted "significant gains" on standardized math tests compared with control groups, with lower-income students recording the highest gains, says Gavin. Alison Foley's fourth-graders were among those who showed gains, and, to her relief, her kids also swept through their district-level tests. She had worried about the results, because the M^3 curriculum was such a departure from the standard (and tested) math curriculum in the district.

Foley sees other benefits too—especially for girls who traditionally have been underrepresented in advanced math programs. In regular math classes, boys tend to be more assertive, blurting out answers, while girls hang back. In the M^3 classrooms, students often work in pairs and discuss solutions, Foley says, and that helps girls rehearse their answers and support their thinking.

Students like Mariam are benefiting. When the class began, says Foley, "Mariam was overshadowed by the other kids, especially the boys." But as the year went on her confidence grew. In a recent algebra unit, she argued her point against the entire class—and she was right, says Foley. "That was a huge step for her, and now she has become, in a subtle way, a leader."

Courtney, who pronounces Project M^3 "just awesome," appreciates being in a class with kids who share her passion for numbers. "The difference between this class and the others is that the kids in the other math classes do it for the rewards, because they're going to get gum or chocolate or something," she says. "And when they come out of math, they look so unhappy! But when we come out of math, we have smiles on our faces because we love it." nea

Scouting For Talent

Look around your classroom. Could bored Brittany, loquacious Lakisha, or rambunctious Robert benefit from gifted education services? Here's how to find out:

KNOW THE SIGNS. Gifted students often demonstrate advanced performance in one or more disciplines and abstract or complex thinking. They may also have an increased ability to make connections and see relationships. Varying your assignments can bring out the best in some students: For example, try letting kids show what they know through skits, poems, or dioramas.

PRE-TEST. Find out what students know before you teach a new topic. Both formal assessments (quizzes or interest inventories) and informal (observations or class discussion) can help you identify students who require enrichment activities or an accelerated pace.

WATCH FOR CLUES. Sometimes actions speak louder than words. A kid who seems bored or disinterested (even acting up) may, in fact, need more challenging work. Talk with the child, a parent, or his or her former teacher to track the behavior pattern and address the issue.

ALLOW FOR DIFFERENCES. All students have academic strengths and weaknesses. A gifted student who excels in science may struggle in writing. Try to make sure students are working at the appropriate level of challenge in each subject area to ensure their growth.

SOURCE: ADAPTED FROM THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR GIFTED CHILDREN, WWW.NAGC.ORG.

PHOTOS: JONTHAN OLSON

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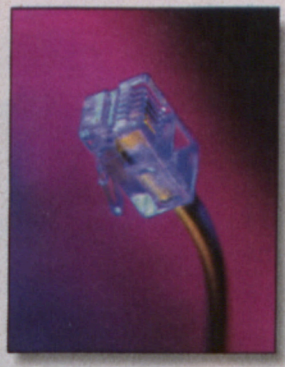

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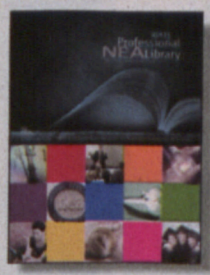

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ANSWERING THE CALL

THE HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

We start the year by looking back at NEA's rich history—the impact it has had on the lives of public school educators and the children they serve. First of a four-part series.

BY SABRINA HOLCOMB

On a summer afternoon in 1857, 43 educators gathered in Philadelphia, answering a national call to unite as one voice in the cause of public education. At the time, learning to read and write was a luxury for most children—and for many children of color, it was actually a crime. But almost 150 years later, the voice of the fledgling Association has risen to represent 2.7 million educators, and what was once a privilege for a fortunate few is now a rite of passage for every American child.

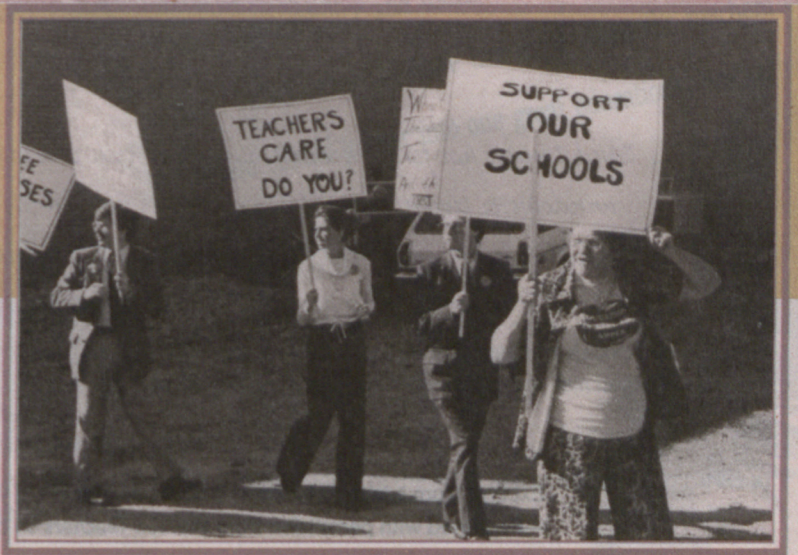
Over the years, NEA has played an increasingly vital role in improving the conditions under which teachers work and children learn. In the turbulent 1960s, the historic merger of the NEA and the predominantly Black American Teachers Association promoted the human and civil rights of educators and students of all ethnicities.

Today, public schools guarantee every American child a free education, regardless of race or gender, religion or spoken language, social class or disability. And when this diverse group heads to school each morning, dedicated NEA members are there to teach, drive, feed, counsel, nurse—and inspire.

A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

EARLY SCHOOLS
(CIRCA 1890s)

INTEGRATION
(CIRCA 1960S)



MEMBERS RALLY
(CIRCA 1970S)

PHOTO TOP: NEA ARCHIVES; BOTTOM LEFT: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS ; CENTER: CORBIS; RIGHT: NEA ARCHIVES

A SINGLE VOICE

A hundred years before the birth of NEA, education was largely informal—the main requirements for teaching were the ability to read, write, and stay out of trouble. By the mid-1800s, however, widespread education reforms had led to an emerging public school system and professional training for teachers.

Despite reforms, many teachers continued to work in lonely isolation in one-room schoolhouses with scanty teaching materials, uncertain public support, and salaries of less than $100 a year—sometimes the "salary" was food and lodging.

Who would champion the nation's teachers? State education associations existed in 15 of the 31 states in the Union, but there was no national organization to serve as a single clear voice for America's teachers. Until one day in 1857, when 10 state associations sent out "The Call," an invitation to the nation's educators to unite.

Although membership in the new National Teachers Association (NTA) was restricted to "gentlemen," the two women who answered the call were made honorary members and permitted to sign the constitution. This restriction would last for nine years.

Cassville, Missouri, July 5, 1850

"And I must not forget the schoolhouse which is a log house thirty-five by thirty with four windows & two doors... The cracks are filled with mud and plaster & there is no 'loft' & the shingles are very holey so that when it rains we take the books and stand in one place till it begins to drop down & then we move to an other spot & then an other..."

Affectionately Yours,
M.M. Rogers

Excerpt from a letter written by Martha M. Rogers, a young female pioneer who headed West to teach.
—Reprinted with permission from *Women Teachers on the Frontier* by Polly Welts Kaufman

MISS BLANCHE LAMONT AND MONTANA LOG SCHOOL
(Left) The young women who staffed the new schools often had to choose between marriage and teaching, since many states had laws barring married teachers. Eventually marriage became acceptable, but pregnancy was not: A teacher had to leave her job as soon as her condition showed—a practice that continued until the 1970s, when NEA won the fight to overrule mandatory leave for expectant teachers.

The Call

BELIEVING THAT WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED for the states by state associations may be done for the whole country by a National Association, we, the undersigned, invite our fellow-educators throughout the United States to assemble...for the purpose of organizing a National Teachers Association...We cordially extend this invitation to all practical teachers in the North, the South, the East, and the West, who are willing to unite in a general effort to promote the general welfare of our country by concentrating the wisdom and power of numerous minds, and distributing among all the accumulated experiences of all; who are ready to devote their energies and their means to advance the dignity, respectability and usefulness of their calling; and who, in fine, believe that the time has come when the teachers of the nation should gather into one great educational brotherhood..."

— *August 26, 1857*

THE CALL
(Above) The 1857 invitation to form the National Teachers Association was written by Thomas Valentine, president of the New York Teachers Association.

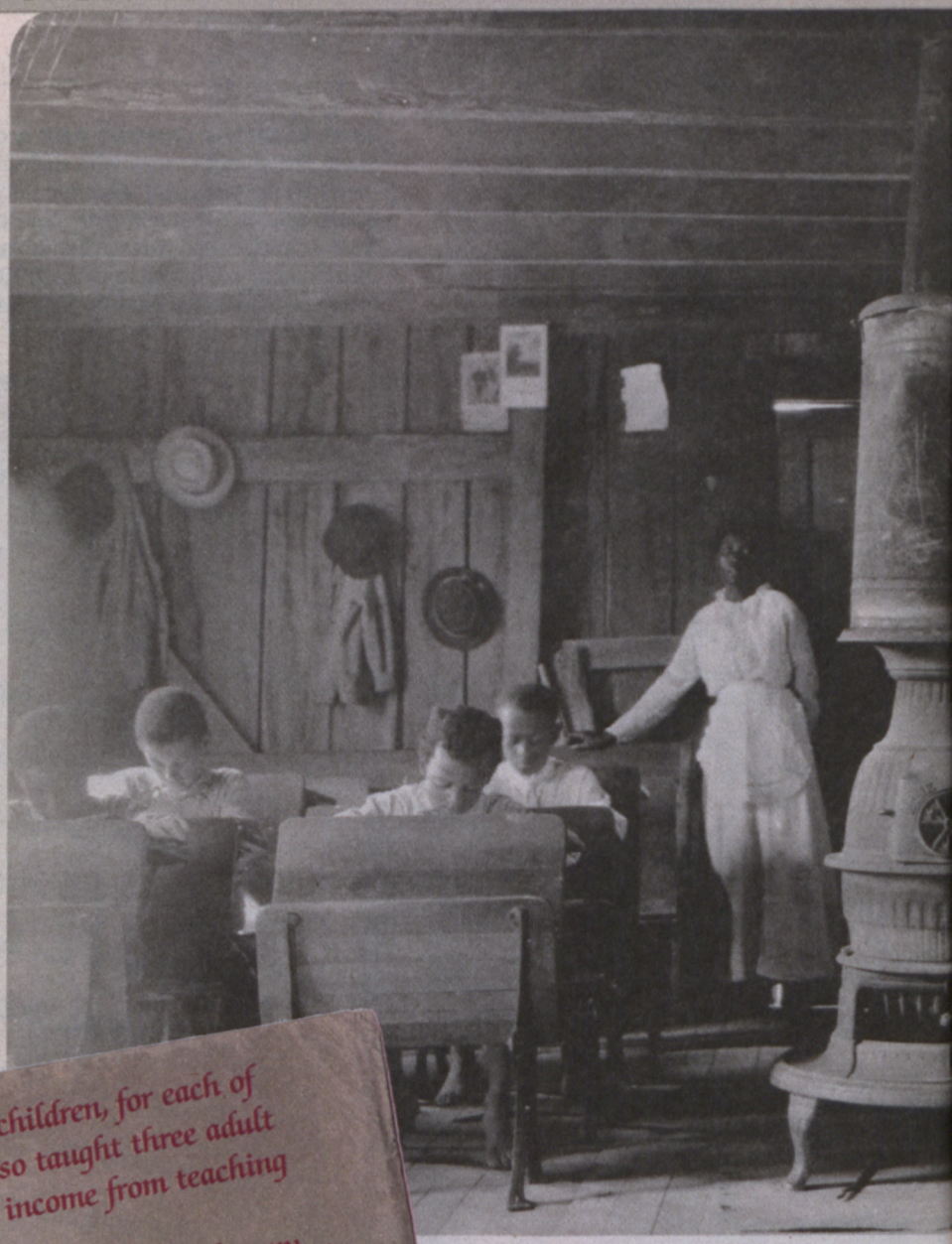
ZALMON RICHARDS
(Left) Zalmon Richards, first president of the NTA, began his teaching career at the age of 17.

FRAMED PHOTO: NEA ARCHIVES; CENTER PHOTO: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS

BLACK SCHOOLS

By 1857, half a million free people of African descent lived in the United States. In some communities, "free people of color" had built their own schools. Robert Campbell, the single Black founding member of NTA, taught at the Philadelphia Institute for Colored Children, which educated Black, bi-racial, and American Indian children. Four years after the birth of NTA, 23 Ohio teachers formed the earliest known Black teacher's association. Members reported salaries of $18 to $50 per month.

Education for people of color was a controversial issue. Some states had established public schools for Black children as early as the 1820s. However, the slaveholding states had outlawed education for slaves, and some states had even outlawed education for free Blacks. Even so, some took risks to learn to read.



"My first school consisted of three children, for each of whom I was paid fifty cents a month. I also taught three adult slaves at night, thus making my monthly income from teaching only three dollars...

The next thing which arrested my attention was botany... Descriptive chemistry, natural philosophy, and descriptive astronomy followed in rapid succession... My researches in botany gave me a relish for zoology; but as I could never get hold of any work on this science I had to make books for myself. This I did by killing such insects, toads, snakes, young alligators, fishes, and young sharks as I could catch. I then cleaned and stuffed those that I could, and hung them upon the walls of my school-room."

Daniel Alexander Payne, President of Wilberforce University in Ohio, was the first African-American college president in the United States. Born to free parents, Payne opened his own school at the age of 19. He wrote about educating himself and his students in his autobiography.

—Excerpt from Recollections of Seventy Years by Daniel Alexander Payne, c. 1830

THE CIVIL WAR

In 1861, the issue of slavery dominated the minds and conversations of many Americans. As the quarrel between the North and the South over slavery and other issues worsened, a troubled nation descended into Civil War. The war and its consequences naturally preoccupied the members of the National Teachers Association. During this difficult era, NTA focused on the impact of the war on public education.

"CRIMINAL" ACTS
(Right) Every slaveholding state had laws forbidding the education of slaves, but in some states, it was also illegal to educate free people of color.

PUBLIC LAW

"All persons who shall teach, or permit or cause to be taught, any slave in this state, to read or write, shall, on conviction thereof, before any court of competent jurisdiction be imprisoned not less than one month nor more than twelve months."

NEXT MONTH
NEA at the Turn of the Century

Most Americans believed the war wouldn't last long. But after four long years and over half a million lives lost, the Civil War finally came to an end in the spring of 1865. At that summer's convention, NTA President J.P. Wilkersham denounced slavery and recommended that no seceded states be readmitted to the Union until they agreed to provide a free public school system for Black as well as White children. The hard work of Reconstruction had begun—for the nation and for its educators. nea

NTA PRESIDENT J.P. WILKERSHAM
(Above)

SCHOOL PORTRAIT
(Right) Black school children during the Civil War era.

FRAMED PHOTO: NEA ARCHIVES; PHOTOS CENTER AND RIGHT: CORBIS

Can You See Me Now?

GPS technology gives bus drivers (and their bosses) an extra set of eyes.

School bus driver Bo Yealy was miles into the Nevada desert, traveling down a barren stretch of road, when she noticed her two-way radio wasn't picking up any signal. With her electronic tether to the Clark County School District dispatch headquarters cut, Yealy wondered, "What would I do if something happened to the bus?"

Had her bus been equipped with a global positioning system (GPS), Yealy said she wouldn't likely have worried. The device, typically a small metal box mounted on the bus, syncs with an ever-circling satellite network that transmits the vehicle's location as drivers make their rounds.

Originally developed as a navigational tool for the U.S. Department of Defense, GPS began cropping up in the private sector in the 1990s. Its installation in school buses is relatively new—no regulating body tracks its use on school buses yet—but it is a growing trend, according to transportation industry observers. Some of the largest school districts in Texas, Florida, New York, California, and Virginia added GPS last year.

Concern about bus breakdowns isn't the only thing driving GPS purchases. School boards also cite fears of terrorism or hijackings—such as the 2002 incident in which a Pennsylvania bus driver took his students on an unscheduled five-hour trip to Washington, D.C., all while stowing a loaded rifle behind his seat.

More sophisticated GPS units not only track a bus' location, but also its speed and operating time. In Dallas/Fort Worth, dispatchers get a signal if any buses stop for more than two minutes, indicating a possible problem.

But that level of increased monitoring capability recently compelled Boston school bus drivers to fight a plan to put the devices on their buses—a battle they eventually lost. Drivers feared the systems would be used as a spying tool, and lead to punitive action for pick-up and drop-off delays. They have vowed to continue fighting this year for removal of the GPS units.

While NEA drivers have launched no such offensive, they do want to know more about the system's purpose and to be informed when it lands on their buses, according to Joe Murphy, a UniServ representative for the New Jersey Education Association's education support professionals.

"You can't just say 'OK, we're going to put GPS on all your buses because some vendor pitched it to the superintendent at a conference,'" says Murphy, whose group comprises 3,000 school bus drivers. "That's the wrong way to handle it."

The right way, he says, is to have "a collective group meeting, including drivers, focusing on what the needs are and what the benefits are."

Meanwhile, drivers can take a few crucial steps. First, find out if you already have GPS on your bus. You want to be aware of all tracking devices at work as you drive. If there is no unit, you and your fellow drivers may want to learn more about the system.

If you think it could mean crucial protection for you and your students, consider lobbying your district to add GPS to its fleet. Finally, be aware that you might not need a unit installed in your bus to have access to the system. Many cell phones now come with GPS technology, as do some two-way radios. Call your cell phone company or ask the dispatcher if your radio has GPS, and if so, how it works.

The key is being well-informed, says Bonnie Chalfant, a driver in Gloucester Township, New Jersey, and member of the New Jersey Education Association executive committee. She chatted about GPS with fellow drivers at last year's Representative Assembly.

"There was some talk about invasion of privacy," says Chalfant. "But we just believe that we're professionals and we know how to handle any situation or equipment. A good driver doesn't have to worry about it."

—CYNTHIA KOPKOWSKI

Want to know how GPS works?

GPS is a constellation of 27 Earth-orbiting satellites. To find out how it tracks vehicles, visit howstuffworks.com and type "GPS."

IMAGE COMPOSITE: GETTY IMAGES AND C. LOPEZ

Should teachers eat lunch with their students?

[YES]

Eating lunch with students can be both an enriching and rewarding experience, but the outcomes depend heavily upon the personality of the teacher, the receptiveness of the students, and the dynamics of the school culture, which may change from year to year.

As an African-American teacher in a predominantly White high school, I decided two years ago to "visit" a table at my high school each day and spend the entire lunch period mingling with different groups of students. To my surprise, I was not only tolerated, but was actually included as an active part of the conversation. I was greeted with the same cordiality time and time again as I circulated around the cafeteria each day. One day I would sit with a small band of young African-Americans, the next day with an integrated group, the next with all females or all males, the next with Japanese or Caucasian students. After a while, the students began to ask me ahead of time if I would "grace" their table at the following day's lunch period.

I learned a lot from sitting with the students and listening to their perspectives. And they appreciated my efforts. Some of them described me as "human," "cool," "down-to-earth," "approachable," and "caring."

I'm not sure what the other faculty members were saying when I saw their mouths moving and their eyes directed toward me, but who cared? I was having the time of my life, revisiting the reasons that I had become a teacher in the first place.

After that first year, I appeared in the yearbook a whopping eight times! The next year, my classroom door was decorated with a big sign that said: "Ms. T for Homecoming Queen."

Could everyone have the same experience eating lunch with their students? Could I have the same experience year after year as new students come and go? I don't know, but I think it's worth a try.

ANGLEA TOWNSEND teaches English at Greenwood High School in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

[NO]

My first two years of teaching was spent in a private school. I did not receive a single break throughout the day and was always on lunch duty where I had to monitor noise levels and student behavior rather than actually getting to eat my lunch. Often, I didn't eat lunch until after school. Even bathroom breaks were at a minimum! I look back on my experience and wonder how I managed. Feeling burned out and exhausted, there were many moments I just wanted to pull my hair out.

For the past two years I've been a kindergarten teacher in a public school where I'm given regular breaks and a lunch hour. I find myself so much more relaxed, comfortable, and happy to be with my students. I cherish my breaks and lunch. It's a way for me to recoup and get ready for the rest of the day. I feel like I'm a much better teacher because I can think more clearly after having a break.

I also don't get upset with my students as easily. I love my job, and love my students, but having some down time really helps me to appreciate my students more.

Looking back, I realize how wrong it was for the private school not to provide me with a duty-free lunch or regular breaks. In fact, I've since learned that not providing teachers with a lunch break is against the law in Oregon. I know the school was trying to cut corners to save money, but those cost savings came at the mental expense of the teachers, which sometimes spilled over into the classroom.

I am so thankful to now be in a public school where I'm able to eat my lunch every day without interruptions and to have breaks on a normal schedule. I know that my public school would never cut corners by taking my duty-free lunch away. It is against the law, and my union would never allow it.

LAURA L. EASON teaches kindergarten at Lorane Elementary in Lorane, Oregon.

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

Should teachers eat lunch with their students?
To vote, visit our Web site at www.nea.org/neatoday and see the results instantly.

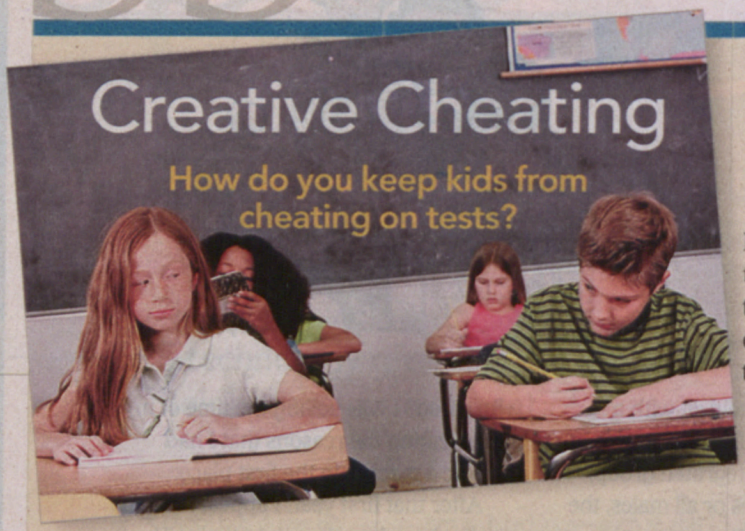
Should high schools prepare all students for college?
The tally on the question in the last *NEA Today*: 50% Yes 50% No

Should girls be encouraged to take more math classes? If you'd like to take part in this future Debate, send a brief note to Cindy Long, **clong@nea.org.**

ILLUSTRATION: TED PITTS

Creative Cheating

How do you keep kids from cheating on tests?



ANSWER: Here's my advice after 25 years of teaching. I make six versions of the test, so only a few kids spread out in class have the same test. As I hand out the tests, I announce that I will write a referral if any student tries to cheat, and, if I think it's necessary, I will tell a student to move to a different seat. Rather than working on papers at my desk, I walk around as my students take the test and watch out for the following things (*And yes, all these are ways I've caught students cheating!*):

- papers or notebooks on the floor
- pockets that may open up as a student leans forward (hidden cheat sheet)
- backpacks that may have an answer sheet in them
- boys with very baggy pants (lots of pockets)
- cheat sheet stuck behind a student's chair for the kid sitting behind to read
- student with foot on top of notebook (answers on the cover)
- something a student has written on the wall or the teacher's desk
- girls wearing skirts (answers on their thighs)
- girls with long hair (answers on their necks)
- students who are looking at me while I watch them.

If students have to use a prep sheet to answer the questions, put that info on the back of the paper so they have to constantly flip their tests. That way it's harder for students to focus on someone else's test. Something to think about: If kids are cheating a lot, teaching the lesson in a different way may yield better results!

MONICA DIBA
Clearwater, Florida

ANSWER: In teaching high school math, I encourage the use of graphing calculators daily *and* solving problems by hand. When it's time for assessment, I give students a two-part test: calculator and non-calculator. To make sure students are not using calculators when they're not supposed to, I use colored paper. The calculator section of the test is copied in color (usually blue), and the non-calculator section is copied on regular white paper.

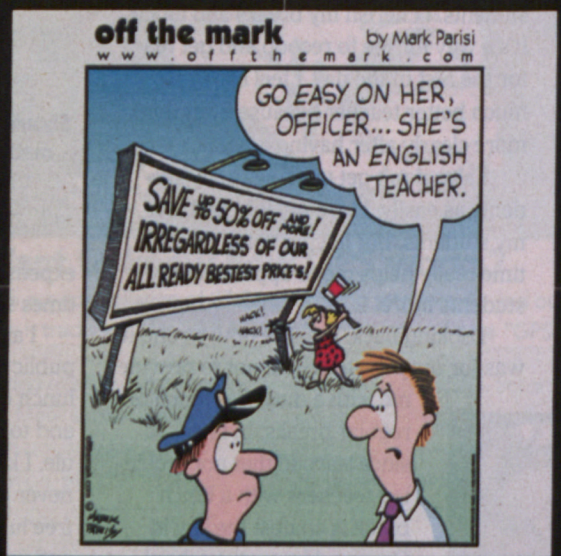
This makes it a lot easier for the teacher: Graphing calculators can only be on students' desks when the colored paper is on their desks. Students take, and turn in, the non-calculator part of the test first.

MEIKE MCDONALD
Charlestown, South Carolina

Indoor Voices

I'm a former kindergarten teacher who is teaching fourth grade for the first time, and it's clear to me that as students get bigger, so do their voices. The noise level in our cafeteria at lunchtime is so loud that all four fourth-grade classes were given assigned seating at lunch. We also have parents and assistants monitoring the cafeteria, but it's not working! Any suggestions on how to lessen the noise level?

CINDY LEKI
Fairfax, Virginia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CALENDAR LESSONS

When putting the date on your classroom calendar, you have the perfect opportunity to practice both repeating and growth patterns with students. By using different colored shapes with numbers written on them, you can show repeating patterns with the shapes and colors, and growth patterns with the numbers. Students can count by 2s, 3s, 4s, etc. You can also use the calendar to teach even and odd numbers, primes and composites, multiples, etc.

ELAINE TRANTHAM
Sharon, Kansas

PHOTO TOP LEFT: IMAGE SOURCE; PHOTO LEFT: CHAD BAKER/RYAN MCVAY; CARTOON: MARK PARISI; PHOTO ABOVE: NATHAN HAM

Gone Fishing?

IF A CHILD IS PRESENT from the start of school until 11:30, he or she is counted as present for the day. I have several students whose parents pick them up at 11:35 for reasons such as shopping. This means the student misses a half-day of instruction. Does anyone else have this problem? If so, how do you deal with it?

ELIZABETH COOK
Albemarle, North Carolina

Ask Three Before Me

This oldie but goodie still has legs. Teaching in a K–6 computer lab with 20+ students at a time can be quite taxing when the questions come fast and furiously. My classroom rule, "Ask Three Before Me," has turned out to be successful strategy on several fronts: The teacher is freed up to work individually with struggling students; the teacher can do more assessment; and the students asked for help can demonstrate their understanding of the topic. Student helpers can't just take the mouse and do the job; they must actually teach their classmates to understand the concept or skill.

PAUL BROOKS CLARK
Manchester, Massachusetts

Magic Chalk

This tip is for teachers who still use chalkboards instead of whiteboards. I discovered that if you get the *big*, porous sidewalk chalk and soak it in water, you can write on the board and it's barely visible at first. You can then blow on it or wave your hand over it and the writing "magically" appears. I tell students it's "magic chalk" and they're totally engaged. I only do this periodically, when I want to emphasize a particular point on which I want them to focus. It's fun and adds a little humor to the class.

—JON WOMACK
High school teacher
Sycamore, Illinois

LIGHTEN UP

SPELL CHECK

My co-teacher had to be absent and left plans for his substitute that included the following typo: "Mrs. Gilliland, my co-teacher, will be happy to ruin the class for you."

At least I *hope* it was a typo!

CHERYL GILLILAND
Roanoke, Virginia

BURST BUBBLE

On the last day of school a student told me she enjoyed my class the best. My head was swelling with pride as I asked her what was the best part about having me as a teacher. Without missing a beat she said, "I chewed gum every day and you never caught me."

GLEN BROWN
Douglas, Georgia

Share your wisdom, ask your question!

What's your best bulletin board idea?

Send your answer to this or other questions on this page (and a digital photo of your bulletin board, if you have it), to **sholcomb@nea.org**. Have a question you'd like to see posted? Send it along with your name, job, and the city and state where you work.

For a weekly e-mail of questions, answers, and classroom tips, sign up for Works4Me, one of NEA's most popular services. Just send the message "subscribe Works4Me" (without the quotation marks) to **Lyris@list.nea.org**.

WHAT MAKES YOU SMILE?

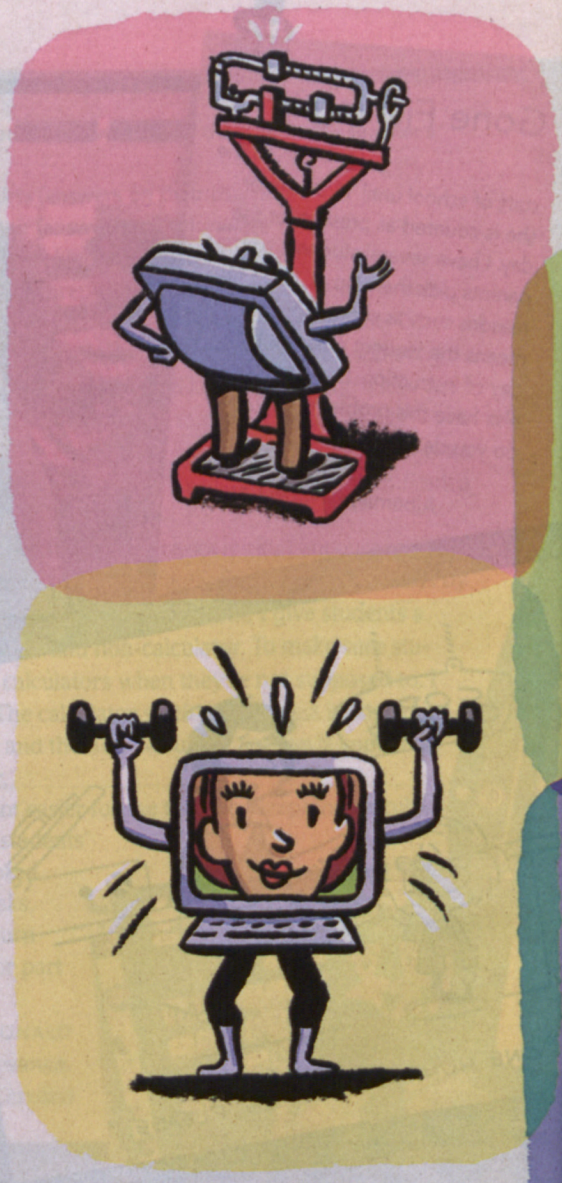
Send a fun story to Sabrina Holcomb, **sholcomb@nea.org.**

PHOTO TOP: STOCKBYTE; PHOTO MIDDLE: PHOTODISC; CARTOON: GEORGE CRENSHAW; ILLUSTRATION: MCMILLAN

Click To Lose

Eager to shed those extra post-holiday pounds? These top nutritional Web sites—packed with meal plans, calorie trackers, fitness tips, and more—can help you get started.

BY SHEREE CRUTE



All the signs of a new year are here: the air is frosty, post-holiday budgets are busted, and, if you're like us, you can't button your favorite jeans. Maybe you're also pondering another January ritual: resolving to "lose this extra weight by summer or else!" The problem is, fancy eating plans and gyms can cost a bundle. So we decided to check into no- and low-cost nutritional and fitness advice that can be found at the click of a mouse, when it's convenient. (There go the excuses!) While this list isn't meant to be comprehensive, we did find some great sources of information and inspiration for peeling off some pounds before it's time to pull on those bathing suits again. And as you peruse cyberspace for help, remember to first consult your doctor before starting any new diet or exercise plan.

The New Food Pyramid

Remember the food pyramid? That friendly, but vague, official reminder of what we should and shouldn't eat? Last year, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) unveiled, with great fanfare and flourish, My Pyramid (www.MyPyramid.gov), a new, interactive version of the old food pyramid, with an emphasis on weight loss. While getting diet tips from the government is certainly cheaper than joining Jenny Craig, how does it measure up?

When Gloria Brown, who teaches fourth- and fifth-graders as part of Project Explore in Wolcott, Connecticut, gave My Pyramid a try, she found a mix of pros and cons. First, she followed the prompts to enter her age, gender, and level of physical activity. "I liked the sample menus that came up under 'Tips and Resources,'" she says. The menus included the recommended calories and nutrients she should eat from each food group, based on the information she'd provided. However, the generalized eating plan also revealed the pyramid's greatest shortcoming. "They never ask what weight you are or how much you want to lose," she says.

An oversight? Not according to the USDA. "We are emphasizing balance and moderation," says Kelly Nettleton, deputy director of the USDA Center for Nutrition and Policy Promotion.

Encouraging people to lead healthier lives is always a good thing, but general advice may leave some dieters at a disadvantage if they don't know which foods to eat less of.

"Just 100 calories a day—a soft drink—can add up to 10 to 15 pounds in a year unless you compensate for the extra intake with exercise or cutting back on other calories," notes Susan Swithers, associate professor of Psychological Science at Purdue University. In addition, she says, "there's extraordinary variability from person to person in how many calories and how much exercise is needed to lose or maintain weight." It's easy to see how the unwary dieter could have trouble losing weight following the My Pyramid guidelines.

Still, the site does hit the mark in other important areas. Here's how to get the most mileage from it:

Try 'My Pyramid Tracker'

This interactive tool allows you to input the foods you eat each day, then analyzes whether or not you're consuming too many calories for general weight loss, based on your activity level. It also evaluates the quality of your diet, based on your food selections.

Exercise Smarter

Learn how to incorporate exercise into your busy life with "Inside the Pyramid." "The minimum 30 minutes of exercise a day recommendation may seem overwhelming," Swithers says, so consider breaking it up into three, 10-minute bursts of activity, such as exercising while watching your favorite TV show or taking a brisk walk after school.

ILLUSTRATION: MICHAEL SLOAN

ing for detailed weight loss advice, but, as Brown points out, "it did help me make better eating decisions."

Pay To Lose

Information for slimming down abounds on the Internet but, not surprisingly, sites offering made-for-you guidelines will cost some. Here are two of the more respected online diet/fitness programs that some NEA members have tried:

Customization Plus: EDiets.com

If you want a super-tailored, healthy eating plan geared to the amount of weight you want to lose, head to www.ediets.com. For $11.96 per month, you can select from one of 12 eating plans and follow the prompts to customize it to your preferences. (Hate haddock? No problem!) For another $1.99 per week, you can access specific fitness advice, and for an extra $1 per week, you can tap into the site's chat rooms and boards and "attend" online meetings led by experts.

Calandra Lewis, a sixth-grade teacher at Mendenhall Middle School in Greensboro, North Carolina, says she signed up for Ediets in January of last year because her doctor encouraged her to lose weight. "My blood pressure and cholesterol levels were too high," she says. So far Lewis has lost 79 pounds, with 20 more to go. "I like this plan because it spells everything out," she says. "I don't have to sit there and wonder what I'll eat."

The bottom line: Ediets provides a complete diet/fitness package from the convenience of home. If you're not sure about signing up, the site offers lots of free diet information and a tracker that can be used to watch caloric intake.

Virtual Meetings and More: Weight Watchers Online

Considered one of the safest eating plans around, Weight Watchers members have lost—and kept off—millions of pounds. With the current program, members can either make their own food choices and track points, or forget counting and use the Core Plan, which lets them eat as much as they want from a list of core foods. Now members can even skip the meetings and get everything they need—meals, recipes, and community—online (www.weightwatchers.com). After an initial start-up fee, the plan costs $16.95 per month. ETools, geared to members who attend meetings, provides a handy way of tracking points, but also provides recipes, tips, and access to chats for $12.95 per month.

Elizabeth Stuckart, an NEA Student member in her third year at Seton Hall University, recently signed up for eTools. "I thought it would be easier and more fun for me to track my points that way, and it is," says Stuckart, who has lost 22 pounds so far.

The bottom line: Weight Watchers provides an effective and healthy weight loss plan. If you like the basic program but don't want to attend meetings, you can get everything you need, including support, online. nea

Entertain New Ideas

"Related Links" leads to other government sites with information on meal planning, nutrition, and fitness strategies. Brown says she found more menus and "best of all, the Portion Distortion Quiz" at the site of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (http://hin.nhlbi.nih.gov/portion). "I didn't get an exact calorie count, but I learned that my plate was definitely too full."

The bottom line: My Pyramid is probably not the answer if you're look-

Sweet Treats: Low-Cal Oreos 'n Cream

NEA Member Tip

I've been on Weight Watchers since mid-November of 2004 and I've lost 55 pounds so far. When I have to satisfy the urge for something chocolate after a meal, I pick up a box of Nabisco's 100-calorie Pack Oreo Crisps and fat-free Cool Whip. The crisps have great Oreo flavor, but they lack the cream, so I dip the Oreo Crisps in the Cool Whip. It comes in at under 150 calories, even if you're generous with the whip.

PAM NIELSON, MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER
AURORA, ILLINOIS

A Squeegee Save

Brave and resourceful bus driver Sharon Jeffreys saves a girl from a dog attack.

HAZARD LIGHTS, MIRRORS, FIRE EXTINGUISHER. Of all the safety equipment on her school bus, North Carolina driver Jeffreys never thought she'd rely on a squeegee as a potential lifesaver.

But one morning, a 10-year-old girl on Jeffreys' East Wake High School bus route was trying to save an even younger neighbor from an attacking pit bull when the driver came upon the scene. Minutes earlier, the pit bull had attacked the 5-year-old boy. As the girl grabbed its collar and tugged at the 40-pound dog, it bit her repeatedly on the arms.

"To be honest, I thought the dog and little girl were playing," Jeffreys says, recalling what had started as a routine morning. But, as she got closer, she realized that the young girl was being attacked. "When I heard the girl scream, that's when I stopped the bus. I said to myself, 'Oh Lord, it's a pit bull,' and I knew I couldn't let that girl get hurt," she says.

Jeffreys told her students to remain seated and picked up the sturdiest item she could find: the thin, two-foot-long, squeegee. Jeffreys ran out of the bus and used the squeegee to distract the dog by pounding the tool over and over on the ground. "I kept doing it, and eventually the little girl got loose," Jeffreys says.

Then she gave the dog a knock to keep him away. Her aim was so accurate that she dented the handle of her trusty squeegee.

Jeffreys succeeded in saving the young girl, and her act of bravery turned her into a celebrity on local TV stations and in area newspapers. The mother of the young girl also personally thanked Jeffreys. "She gave me a great big hug," says Jeffreys, "That was very nice."

—RITU SHARMA

If You Build It...

Children at one Peruvian school lacked the basics. Keri Bristow's solution? Build them a new one.

DURING A TRIP TO PERU last year, Bristow, a Spanish teacher in Woodstock, Vermont, included a school visit among the other more traditional sightseeing ventures scheduled. After hiking Machu Pichu and visiting Lake Titicaca, she came to the beleaguered school in the jungle. With dirt floors, a few tattered books, and no bathrooms, it was a world away from her own Woodstock Union High School. Bristow vowed to build an entire new school that would serve as a clean, safe environment for the students and benefit the impoverished community as a whole.

Back home, Bristow recruited volunteers to help. Twenty-three high school students and 12 parents, contractors, and laborers mustered to plan and build the school. The projected budget? A daunting $25,000. A year of raffles, dinners, and plant sales brought the group enough money to construct the school and pay for medical supplies and fresh water for the community.

In February, they flew to Peru and picked up on the work begun weeks earlier by laborers in the community. Bristow and her volunteers worked for two weeks through blistering heat and torrential rain, digging trenches, mixing cement, and painting. When they were done, a new elementary school complete with a floor, roof, ventilation, and indoor plumbing stood tall. Inside were several thousand dollars' worth of school supplies and 50 new library books in Spanish, donated by students.

Bristow hopes to return to Peru in 2007. Her goal? Build a school in a neighboring community.

—MEGHA RAJAGOPALAN

PHOTOS TOP: LINDA POWELL JONES; BOTTOM LEFT: CRAIG LINE

Think Globally, Act (Very) Locally

Washington State teacher Val Schroeder makes a difference one day, and one backyard, at a time.

SCHROEDER PLAYS A DOUBLE ROLE in her daily life. During the school day, she teaches creative writing and English at Stanwood High School. Just about every other minute of the day, she serves as the coordinator of the Camano Island Community Project.

Camano Island—a picturesque town located about 70 miles from the United States-Canadian border—recently became the 10th residential community in the country to be certified as a wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation.

The community wildlife habitat program allows neighborhoods to exist in harmony with nature. Residents benefit from landscapes designed to keep water and air resources clean, require little use of pesticides and fertilizers, and pack a powerful aesthetic punch. Mother Nature benefits from a restored and enhanced wildlife corridor.

"We're trying to keep things natural," says Schroeder.

Under her guidance, the Camano Island project has grown to include 534 homes, businesses, community areas, and a school, all certified as backyard wildlife habitats. The areas provide food, water, and shelter where wildlife can raise their young.

Schroeder involves her students in her passion, having them construct bird houses and sign posts. Some students collect supplies and donations for a wildlife rehabilitation center on the island. Schroeder also advises the high school environmental group, which participated in the project by removing noxious weeds from an area slated to become a demonstration garden.

Schroeder says that as a teacher she was elated to have her students and the community involved in such a beneficial project. "I care deeply about the environment and this was my action step," she says, before joking, "It keeps me sane."

—R.S.

Globetrotter

A Tennessee retiree kicks up his heels worldwide to educate folks about folklife.

EVERY JUNE, THE COUNTRY TOWN of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, opens its arms to visitors from around the globe in a celebration of culture and music. Nearly 6,000 people attend the International Folkfest, and it's all due to retired educator Steve Cates.

A member of the Tennessee Education Association-Retired, Cates started with an appreciation for his own town's cultural tradition. To introduce the ways of the past to new generations, he founded the Cripple Creek Cloggers dance troupe in 1967, boasting colorful costumes and fast fiddling reminiscent of the barn-raising parties of the early 1800s. With the Cloggers, Cates has attended more than 100 folk festivals in nations throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America.

Exploring cobblestoned villages in Austria and performing in Puerto Rico, Cates developed an insatiable thirst for travel. And he's done his share of hosting travelers from abroad. The weeklong celebration in Murfreesboro began in 1982 and is still going strong. This year, Cates welcomed troupes from Peru, Jordan, and England.

This is more than a mere hobby. During his 40-year career, Cates frequently used his travel and research in his work. "Teaching social sciences, I was able to talk about the places I have been and people I have met," he says. "The worst sort of teacher is one who has no life experience to add to the classroom."

—DANIEL MOISE

GOT A TIP?

Do you have an interesting story idea? Contact Cynthia Kopkowski, section editor, at **ckopkowski@nea.org**.

PHOTO TOP: STEVE SHELTON; BOTTOM: TAMMY DOHNER

jan '06

resources

53 **Grants & Awards** Tomorrow's filmmakers can compete for prizes today in C-SPAN's annual student film contest.
53 **Diversity Calendar** Commemorating Ellis Island—gateway to a better life for millions.
54 **Black History Month** Resources to help you plan for February.
55 **Take Note** Parents and others can go online to help you with classroom supplies.
56 **Books by NEA Members** A savvy teacher dispenses wisdom and real-world advice on dealing with daily life in the classroom.
59 **On the Web** Young journalists write and publish a new online, international magazine.
59 **Heads Up from NEA Member Benefits** The cure for too much holiday spending; and why understanding Long Term Care Insurance is important for everyone.
61 **In Print** Differentiated instruction—practical strategies from a classroom expert.
61 **NEA's Read Across America** It's time to gear up for America's favorite reading event!
62 **On TV** Enjoy a lush adaptation of Jane Austen's classic, *Pride and Prejudice.*

Don't Miss The NEA Foundation's February Grants Review

THERE'S STILL TIME to apply for grants from The NEA Foundation before the **February 1, 2006,** review date.

On behalf of NEA, The NEA Foundation offers *NEA Fine Arts Grants* to members. Available through local NEA affiliates to elementary (K–6) school art specialists, the grants allow fine arts educators to create and implement programs that promote learning among students at risk of school failure.

Innovation Grants and *Learning & Leadership Grants* are still available for all subjects, including the arts, literacy, science, and technology. Grant amounts are either $2,000 or $5,000.

Applications are accepted on an ongoing, year-round basis, so it's never too late to apply. Proposals received after February 1 will be considered in the next grant review.

Grants fund activities for 12 months from the award date. All practicing K–12 public school teachers, education support professionals, and higher education faculty and staff at public colleges and universities are encouraged to apply.

THE NEA FOUNDATION
www.neafoundation.org

For more information, including project descriptions, guidelines, and downloadable applications, go to **www.neafoundation.org** or call 202-822-7840.

WIN AN ONLINE COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AWARD

Global SchoolNet Foundation recognizes teachers, media specialists, technology coordinators, and other school-based educators who plan and implement outstanding online shared learning projects.

One award of $2,500 will be given to a U.S. educator, and another to an educator outside the United States. Seven finalists will receive $250 each. Candidates must be nominated by someone other than themselves—and soon. The **January 27, 2006,** deadline for new nominations is fast approaching.

Note: this program does not include most online and distance education courses, Web-quests, and simple pen-pal programs. For more information, go to **www.gsnaward.org/award/awardinfo/**.

SCIENCE TEACHER GRANTS

Sponsored by Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A. and administered through the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), Toyota Tapestry Grants support middle and high school science teachers who design and implement science programs that emphasize efficient use of natural resources and protection of the environment.

Elementary teachers who teach science at least 50 percent of the time or who teach science in a self-contained classroom or as teaching specialists may also apply.

Grants are awarded in three categories: environmental science education, physical science applications, and literacy and science education.

Fifty grants of up to $10,000 each and 20 mini-grants of $2,500 will be awarded. Winners of the $10,000 grants will also be flown to Dallas for the Awards Banquet held at the NSTA National Convention.

The application deadline is **January 19, 2006.** Visit **www.nsta.org/programs/tapestry/program.htm** for information and an application.

ILLUSTRATION: GETTYIMAGES

WE THE PEOPLE BOOKSHELF

School and public libraries can win books that encourage young people to read classics and explore themes in American history, culture, and ideas. Sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities and American Library Association, this program supplies 15 books that embody the theme of "Becoming American." Titles are preselected for grades K–3, 4–6, 7–8, and 9–12.

One thousand book sets and supplemental materials will be awarded during 2006. The deadline to submit an application is January 17, 2006. For more information, visit **www.wethepeople.gov/bookshelf/index.html.**

NEA-SATURN/UAW PARTNERSHIP AWARD

This Award recognizes NEA locals and school districts that work together in pursuit of quality education.

The Partnership solicits applications describing exemplary new teacher induction programs that are created and sustained through the joint efforts of the school district and the union, and result in substantially assisting new teachers in their education careers.

Six winners will be recognized during the NEA Board of Directors meeting at the 2006 NEA Representative Assembly (RA) in Orlando, Florida, and in their home districts. They will also be invited to visit Saturn/UAW during American Education Week in November.

Expenses to the RA will be paid for one administrator and one local Association representative from each winning local, however, no monetary grant is associated with this award. The deadline to apply is March 3, 2006. For more, go to **www15.inetba.com/saturnuaw/filecabinet/Satfile/NEAPartnershipcover.htm.**

BECOME A LIBRARIAN

Thirty-seven universities, libraries, and library organizations across the country are offering graduate scholarships to teachers who want to become certified school library media specialists. Funds will provide scholarships of 50, 75, or 90 percent tuition reductions for teachers completing the M.Ed program online.

The deadline to submit an application is March 15, 2006. For information about the application process, visit **http://libweb.mansfield.edu/lapis/.**

STUDENT FILM CONTEST

Budding filmmakers can compete for $25,000 in prizes with C-SPAN's annual StudentCam contest. The competition invites middle and high school students to identify a current political topic of interest and produce a short video documentary (up to 10 minutes) that creatively explores an issue while integrating C-SPAN programming.

The deadline is February 28, 2006. For complete rules and entry information, visit **www.studentcam.org.**

DIVERSITY CALENDAR

JANUARY

JANUARY 1—EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

In 1863, President Lincoln signed this edict proclaiming that all slaves living within rebelling Confederate states "are, and henceforth shall be, free." Visit www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/emancipation_proclamation/.

JANUARY 1—ELLIS ISLAND OPENS

Beginning in 1892, this New York Harbor facility served as the gateway to the United States for more than 20 million people. Search passenger arrival records and add your ancestors to the Ellis Island Wall of Honor at www.ellisisland.org/.

JANUARY 1–3—JAPANESE NEW YEAR

Japan celebrates the 18th year of Emperor Akihito's reign. People decorate their entrances, wear ceremonial attire, visit shrines, and listen to temple bells ring 108 times.

JANUARY 5—FIRST WOMAN GOVERNOR INAUGURATED

In 1925, Nellie Davis Tayloe Ross was sworn in as governor of Wyoming, becoming the nation's first woman to serve in this capacity.

JANUARY 29—CHINESE NEW YEAR

It's the Year of the Dog. People prepare by cleaning house, buying presents, and decorating doorways with *chun lian* (special calligraphic scrolls). On New Year's Eve, families gather to feast and watch fireworks at midnight.

FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 2—BIRTHDAY OF PURA BELPRÉ

First Latina librarian in the New York Public Library. In her honor, the American Library Association gives a biennial award to Latino writers and illustrators whose work best portrays and affirms Latino culture. Visit www.ala.org for a list of past and present winners.

FEBRUARY 6—AFRICAN-AMERICAN READ-IN

Join over a million readers in this annual event. Visit www.ncte.org/prog/readin/107901.htm for information, suggested reading lists, and a downloadable activity packet.

FEBRUARY 15—SUSAN B. ANTHONY'S BIRTHDAY

Born 1820 in Massachusetts, this abolitionist, reformer, labor activist, and social justice pioneer dedicated her life to securing the rights of women.

FEBRUARY 20—FREDERICK DOUGLASS DAY

Abolitionist, lecturer, and writer, Douglass escaped slavery and became an advisor to President Lincoln, as well as the most recognized African-American spokesperson of his time. He died in 1895. Visit www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p1539.html.

FEBRUARY 28—MARDI GRAS

A final chance to feast and frolic before Lent. Fat Tuesday customs include wearing beads, donning elaborate masks and costumes, attending balls and parades, and eating and drinking far into the night.

ILLUSTRATION: GETTYIMAGES

Get Ready for Black History Month

Begun in 1926 through the efforts of noted Black scholar and historian Carter G. Woodson, Black History Month was originally celebrated as a weeklong event. In 1976, the observance expanded to the entire month of February. These resources, including links to NEA's Web site, will help you plan your own observances.

Encyclopedia Britannica's Guide to Black History may well be the most comprehensive online resource available for students and teachers. The Web site boasts a vast collection of articles, galleries with hundreds of images, film and audio clips, and multimedia presentations. Classroom activities and teacher guides are included. Go to **http://search.eb.com/blackhistory**.

African-American World weaves together resources from PBS archives, including articles and interviews from *All Things Considered, Morning Edition, Talk of the Nation,* and the *Tavis Smiley Show,* to create an online mosaic of African-American history and culture. Go to **www.pbs.org/wnet/aaworld** to discover the courage and talent that shaped the African-American experience.

The History of Jim Crow, an online exhibit sponsored by New York Life, takes the viewer on a tour of the origin of Jim Crow, and the struggles of a people to survive, resist, and overcome oppression. You'll also find literature, eye-witness accounts, maps, image galleries, and other resources that explore segregation, disenfranchisement, and violence that lay at the heart of the Jim Crow experience. Many teacher-created lesson plans are available. Go to **www.jimcrowhistory.org**.

We Shall Overcome—Historic Places of the Civil Rights Movement focuses on key locations associated with one of the most important chapters in our nation's history. From Alabama to Mississippi, follow a National Register of Historic Places itinerary through 49 locations in 21 states, as well as the Selma-to-Montgomery Historic Trail, to learn about people and places important to the modern civil rights movement. Located at **http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/**.

Mighty Times—The Legacy of Rosa Parks, a free teaching kit for middle and upper grades, uses first person accounts, stirring dramatizations, and narration by young people to bring to life the story of Rosa Parks, the "mother of the civil rights movement." The kit includes an award-winning film with a teaching guide and classroom activities. To order, turn your Web browser to **www.tolerance.org/teach/resources/mighty_times.jsp**.

On the NEA Web Site
Check out these resources from NEA.org:

- An African-American booklist at **www.nea.org/readacross/resources/afambooks.html**.
- "Horizons of Opportunity: Celebrating 50 Years of *Brown v. Board of Education*" at **www.nea.org/brownvboard/index2.html**.
- "American Teachers Association: The Story of the ATA and the NEA" at **www.nea.org/events/ATA.html**.

Witness to History

In this 1968 photo, NEA President Braulio Alonso, President-elect Elizabeth Duncan Koontz, and other NEA leaders march in Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s funeral procession in Atlanta, Georgia.

Making NEA History

In 1968, Elizabeth Duncan Koontz broke new ground when she was elected as the first African-American President of NEA. Koontz has since been followed by James A. Harris, Mary Hatwood Futrell, and Reg Weaver. Elected in 2002, Weaver is currently serving his second term of office.

Elizabeth Duncan Koontz, 1968–69
North Carolina

James A. Harris, 1974–75
Iowa

Mary Hatwood Futrell, 1983–89
Virginia

Reg Weaver, 2002–08
Illinois

PHOTOS: NEA ARCHIVES

Take Note

Is Your Air Fit To Breathe?

Is mold making you or your students sick? Are you concerned about poor ventilation in your school building? The NEA Health Information Network (NEA HIN) recently released **How to Resolve IAQ Problems in Your School,** a comprehensive fact sheet that outlines steps to take when dealing with indoor air quality or other health and safety issues in schools. Fact sheet highlights include:

IAQ BASICS, including common pollutants found inside and outside a school building

GUIDANCE ON conducting school walkthroughs (what to look for, questions to ask)

ORGANIZING STRATEGIES, such as forming IAQ or Health & Safety Committees and incorporating IAQ-friendly language in contracts or district policy and regulations

HELPFUL WEB SITES and resources, including EPA's *IAQ Tools for Schools* program.

To download, go to to **www.neahin.org/programs/environmental.**

NEA HIN will offer sessions on IAQ at the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, and Pacific Regional Leadership Conferences. If you're a conference participant and interested in health and safety issues, don't miss it!

Wish Upon a Web Site

Nearly everyone knows that teachers spend hundreds of dollars annually from their own pockets on classroom supplies and materials. Here's a neat way to share the burden. **Classroom Wishlist** lets you publish your supply needs so that community members, parents, and grandparents can make specific, tax-deductible donations directly to your class. Similar to a wedding registry, the process is simple to navigate, and 100 percent of donations go directly to solving classroom needs.

Register at **www.classroomwishlist.org** and build a wishlist of everything from Kleenex to books, pencils, or PCs, using an online catalog of more than 40,000 items. Send home a flyer with students inviting parents and community members to make a donation for specific items, or let your local PTA know, and ask them to organize to help you obtain supplies. Using the collected donations, Classroom Wishlist buys the items and ships them directly to your classroom, via your school principal.

Go Bananas for Environmental Awareness Curriculum

If you've been looking for ways to teach environmental awareness, then check out these free lesson plans and resources that emphasize conservation by examining the social, environmental, and economic impact of the world's most popular fruit—the banana.

The Rainforest Alliance offers kindergarten through eighth-grade teachers **free, standards-based environmental curricula.** The hands-on, interactive lesson plans trace the journey of

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Program names vary by location. Not all programs are available at every location. Argosy University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association (NCA) (30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400, Chicago, IL 60602 www.ncahlc.org 1.312.263.0456

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bananas from tropical farms in Honduras to our breakfast tables and lunchbags, and, through social studies-, language arts-, math-, and science-related activities, help students make memorable connections among the topics of nutrition, culture, ecosystems, and economics.

Go to **www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/education/** to access the free K–8 curricula, sign up for the Eco-Educaton Matters e-newsletter, and browse through additional educational resources.

DVD on Stuttering Available to School Libraries

Did you know that James Earl Jones stutters? How about Tiger Woods, Carly Simon, Bruce Willis, or Julia Roberts?

More than 3 million Americans stutter, with males four times more likely to stutter than females. What can you do when you encounter a student with this communication disorder? How do you avoid embarrassing or humiliating situations?

The Stuttering Foundation offers information and advice for parents and teachers in a DVD and 42-page handbook called **Stuttering: Straight Talk for Teachers**. The DVD features clips of students sharing their experiences with the disorder, as well as tips from experts on what works best in a classroom environment.

The accompanying handbook provides additional resources such as checklists and online sources to help adults address the problem with young children.

Both the DVD and handbook are offered free to school and public libraries (limited to one per library). Individuals may also purchase copies for $10 (VHS $5). To request a copy, school librarians should call 1-800-992-9392 or go to **www.stutteringhelp.org/Default.aspx?tabid=427**.

Free Endangered Species Poster from EPA

To lose a single species from an ecosystem affects others that rely on it. Over 1,000 plant and animal species in the United States are currently listed as endangered or threatened, including the black-footed ferret pictured here—the most endangered mammal in the U.S. Call toll free 1-800-490-9198 to order your free color **Save Our Species poster**, or visit **www.epa.gov/ncepihom/ordering.htm**. Use EPA Publication Number 735-F-94-014.

BOOKS BY NEA MEMBERS

THE CLASSROOM

By Michael James D'Amato

Humor and insight are hallmarks of this witty, inspirational book from an experienced urban middle-school teacher. Example: "Allow students to use notes during the first five minutes of a test." *Why?* Aside from rewarding them for taking better notes and being more organized, "... it gives you a legitimate answer to the question, 'Why do we take notes?'" This is only one offering among 180 tips, tricks and classroom activities that will help you motivate your students to take charge of their own learning. 83 pp. $11.95 from iUniverse, Inc. To order, go to www.iuniverse.com.

HARLEY & HOMER

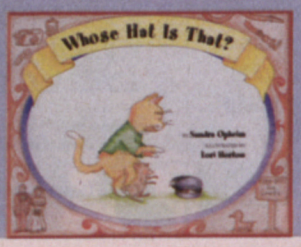
By Donna Ciocca

School isn't the easiest place when you're a 12 year-old who'd rather be anywhere than seated in a desk. The author, a middle school teacher, nails her subject and audience—adolescent boys—with this tale of two friends who go to great lengths to escape boredom and their somewhat difficult lives. From driving Sister Germain crazy to draping religious statues in certain articles of clothing, no prank is too far-fetched for the inventive pair. This comic work of fiction pulls no punches, but its flawed heroes have good hearts. 153 pp. $9.95 from Oak Manor Publishing. To order, call 603-860-5551.

WHOSE HAT IS THAT?

By Sandra Opheim

The cat has found a hat, and he'd like nothing better than to take it back! Thus begins cat's odyssey through town to find the owner of the mysterious hat. Along the way, he learns that nurses, bakers, police officers, and firefighters all wear unique hats. Written in bouncy rhyme by an elementary school teacher, and brightly illustrated in colored pencil, this picture book will appeal to young children and the adults who love to read to them. 26 pp. $5.95 from Better Than One Publishing. Write to 27582 120th St., Staples, MN 56479.



MATH FACTS TO THE MAX: MASTERING THE BASIC FACTS WITH FLASH CARDS AND SONGS

By Carl M. Sherrill

Written by a 30-year teaching veteran and author of multiple titles on math, this book offers a fresh, innovative approach to learning basic number facts. Children master material with strategies that promote understanding and quick recall, including flash card practice and singing songs. A cd-rom, flash card masters, and reproducible pages are included. 180 pp. $24.95 from Morning River Publications. Call 800-852-4890.

PHOTO: CHARLENE BESSKEN, BURUEAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

The tom joyner Foundation

Get prepared at one of these 7 campuses:

Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, GA
Bowie State University, Bowie, MD
Jackson State University, Jackson, MS
Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte, NC
Cheyney State University, Cheyney, PA
Tennessee State University, Nashville, TN
Harris-Stowe State College, St. Louis, MO

NEA & Tom Joyner Foundation

Hey Teachers—Get Certified!

$700,000 Scholarship Program

The Foundation and the National Education Association believe that pre-K through 12 curriculum should be taught by licensed teachers. We recognize that in certain urban, suburban, and rural communities not every teacher is licensed. In an effort to help teachers become fully licensed, the Foundation and NEA have agreed to join forces to assist teachers who desire to gain full licensure.

The Foundation and NEA are offering financial assistance in the following areas:

- Tuition for specified courses
- Books
- Support for preparing to take a state teacher licensure examination

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To be eligible for this program you must be currently employed as a teacher in a K-12 public school, or currently enrolled in an accredited school of education and have completed course work for licensure. Scholarship winners must commit to teach a minimum of three years in identified communities, to be locally determined.

Scholarships will be made through Historically Black Colleges and Universities in selected areas throughout the United States. If you are interested in participating in this program, please go to **www.nea.org/joyner** and fill out the attached short questionnaire, and we will determine your eligibility and an appropriate local HBCU for you to work through.

www.nea.org/joyner

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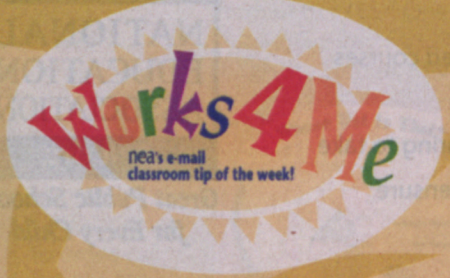

On the Web

MASTER ARTS CLASSES ON SCREEN NOW

Invite internationally recognized performing and visual artists into your classroom with Joy2Learn's online "e-Presentations."

Through video clips and interactive multimedia materials, including maps, pictures, text, and quiz games, Gregory Hines (pictured), Hector Elizondo, Wynton Marsalis, Alan Gampel, and Elizabeth Murray each introduce their art form, discuss its history and background, provide personal insights, and of course, demonstrate their mastery through performance. Sponsored by the Joy2Learn Foundation, the e-Presentations are accessible free of charge at **http://joy2learn.com.**

CIVICS, U.S. GOVERNMENT BROUGHT TO LIFE

Engage middle and high school students in learning with C-SPAN Classroom. Harnessing the vast resources of C-SPAN's archives and ongoing programming for teachers, this free Web site uses state and national standards-based video content, lesson plans, and primary source materials to bring civics and U.S. government classes to life. Developed with a team of social studies teachers, the site features hundreds of video clips and related classroom materials organized into six major topic areas: Principles of Government, U.S. Constitution, Legislative Branch, Executive Branch, Judicial Branch, and Political Participation. Go to **www.c-spanclassroom.org/** to sign up.

VOICES MAGAZINE OFFERS YOUNG JOURNALISTS A FORUM TO SPEAK

Voices (Tomorrow's Leaders—Today's Issues), a free international magazine written solely by 17- to 25-year-old student journalists from around the world, debuts this fall on the Web. Loaded with personal narratives, analyses, and editorials about today's most pressing issues, the magazine provides a forum for young writers to develop their writing, editing, and interviewing skills. From politics to fine arts, contributing journalists explore important—often difficult or volatile—issues and exchange ideas with peers to erase misconceptions and foster global understanding. Readers can move easily through the sophisticated layout, zoom in and out to read text and view pictures, and leaf through the "pages" like a real magazine. Contributions are welcome and actively encouraged. Read *Voices* online at **www.voicesoftomorrow.org.**

"Supporting The NEA Fund is the best vehicle for a public educator advocate to help protect and defend the children, educators and public education in our country. It's like the quote says "if not now, when? — If not me, who?"

Fran Valenzuela,
NEA-Retired, Elementary Teacher
Stewart Elementary — Clear Creek ISD
Houston, Texas

Contribute to The NEA Fund for Children & Public Education.
Go to **www.neafund.org.**

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Call 1-866-266-0211 and mention priority code LKEP-45-924-85 for a decision in as little as 10 minutes. Or visit **www.neamb.com/pl** to apply online. TDD users, please call 1-800-833-6262.

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Opportunities arise every day for educators to help students avoid risky behaviors that can result in unwanted consequences—like teen pregnancy. Despite a recent decline, the United States still leads the western industrialized world in teen pregnancy and unplanned births.

Promoting Sexual Responsibility: A Teen Pregnancy Prevention Resource for School Employees offers strategies that educators can use to help students act responsibly. Drawing on current research and practice, this book answers some difficult questions, such as:

- ✓ **How pervasive is teen pregnancy?**
- ✓ **What can I do to reduce teen pregnancy, promote responsible behavior, and help students succeed?**
- ✓ **Are there examples of programs and activities that work?**
- ✓ **When should schools start to address this problem?**
- ✓ **How can we build a community coalition?**
- ✓ **How do we organize a program at my school?**

With more than 90 teenagers becoming pregnant each hour, schools needs resources like *Promoting Sexual Responsibility* to help find solutions.

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WAITING FOR SIGNS OF LIFE

In this poetic, deeply affecting story of perseverance and strength, a young Afghan girl and an American woman living in Pakistan share in each other's hope and heartache as they search for answers to the fate of their loved ones during the fall of the Taliban. In ***Under the Persimmon Tree,*** author Suzanne Fisher Staples contrasts the effects of war with the ability to endure tragedy and find hope in the future. For grades 8+. 270 pp. $17 from Frances Foster Books. To order, visit www.fsgkidsbooks.com.

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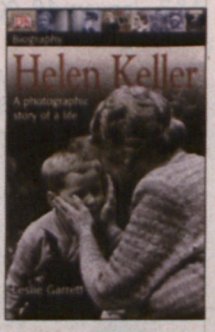
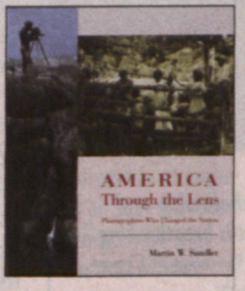


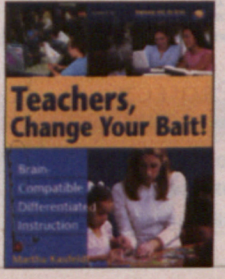
The ***DK Biography*** series presents the lives of some of history's best-known figures, highlighting such remarkable personalities as Helen Keller, Anne Frank, Martin Luther King Jr., and others in a thorough yet highly readable format. Each book is rich with photographs, artworks, artifacts, definition boxes, sidebars, timelines, and a fresh point of view based on the latest scholarship. Ages 8+. 128 pp. $4.99 from DK Publishing, Inc. To order, visit www.dk.com.

THE CAMERA AS CONSCIENCE



Emmy-Award-winning Martin W. Sandler reflects on the work of 12 groundbreaking photographers who changed the way America sees itself. ***America Through the Lens: Photographers Who Changed the Nation*** introduces artists such as Matthew Brady, William Henry Jackson, Jacob Riis, and Dorothea Lange, whose work made a lasting impact on society. Sandler offers thoughtful commentary, but the revealing, often famous photographs speak for themselves. Grades 6–9. 171 pp. $19.95 from Henry Holt and Company. To order, visit www.henryholt.com.

DIFFERENT STUDENTS, DIFFERENT STRATEGIES



Martha Kaufeldt provides updated information on brain research and applies it to K–12 teaching strategies in ***Teachers, Change Your Bait! Brain-Compatible Differentiated Instruction.*** With examples from all grade levels, Kaufeldt demonstrates how to orchestrate powerful learning experiences in response to unique and varying needs. The book includes activities to engage reluctant learners, suggestions for students with special needs, and complex tasks for inspiring those who are more able. 192 pp. $24.95 from Crown House Publishing. To order, go to www.crownhouse.co.uk.

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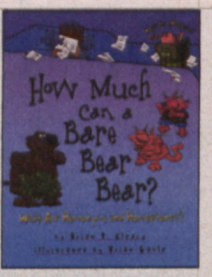
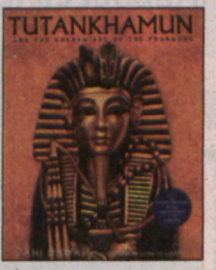


Author Brian P. Cleary and illustrator Brian Gable team up to demystify one of English's trickiest concepts in ***How Much Can a Bare Bear Bear? What Are Homonyms and Homophones?*** Through colorful pictures and silly rhymes, this latest installment in the *Words are CATegorical* series clarifies the differences between words that may sound or look the same but differ in meaning. Most suitable for 7 to 10-year-olds, but fun and instructive for adults too. 32 pp. $15.95 from Learner Publishing Group. Go to www.learnerbooks.com.

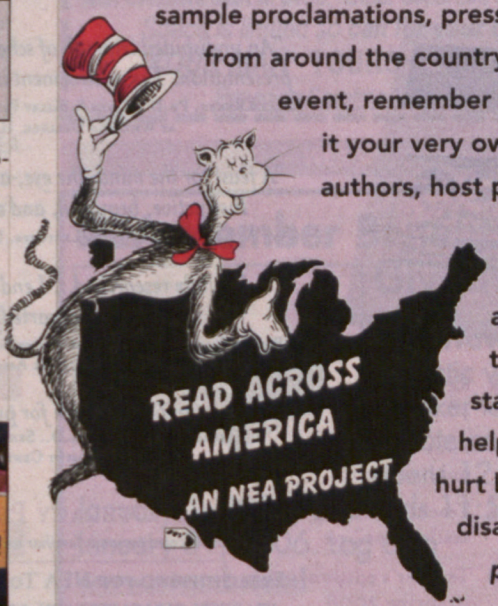
A BOY KING'S SPLENDID TREASURE



A sumptuous companion book to the 2005 four-city tour of the "King Tut" exhibit, ***Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharoahs*** features 130 of the most captivating treasures from the collection. The book includes 178 pages of lavish, full-color photographs of artifacts, plus maps, timelines, and tomb plans with commentary by Zahi Hawass, Secretary General of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities and National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence. 288 pp. $35 from National Geographic. Visit www.nationalgeographic.com.

Make It Personal

March 2, NEA's Read Across America Day, is only months away—time enough to make this year's celebration the biggest and best ever. Check out the online tool kit at www.nea.org/readacross. You'll find sample proclamations, press releases, and tips from around the country. As you plan your event, remember that you can make it your very own. Honor local authors, host poetry slams and reading parties for teens, invite local and state legislators to read, or start a book drive to help school libraries hurt by recent natural disasters. *Oh, the places you can go!*



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On TV

BIOGRAPHY—HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON: CHANGING THE RULES

A&E, January 5, 7 a.m. ET/PT.

Part of an Emmy award-winning series that profiles the lives of political leaders, artists, and other famous figures, this installment chronicles pivotal moments in the remarkable life and career of the controversial former First Lady and current U.S. Senator from New York. Teaching materials are available at www.aetv.com/class.

FROM THE GREAT WAR TO THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Discovery Channel, January 9, 5 a.m. ET/PT.

Explores early 20th century America with a look at the role of the U.S. in WWI; life as a soldier in the trenches; the aftermath of the war and the birth of the Roaring Twenties; the evolution of jazz and the transformation of American music; and the effect of Prohibition on crime and the rise of the American gangster. Can be taped and used in the clasroom for one year. Teaching materials are available at http://school.discovery.com/lessonplans.

NICK NEWS WITH LINDA ELLERBEE: WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?

Nickelodeon, January 13 and 25, 6 a.m. ET/PT.

It isn't easy being different! In this edition of the popular TV news magazine, guest Dr. Phil talks with kids who have neurological disorders about feelings, attitudes, and prejudices associated with being different. Tape and use in your classroom for 10 years.

EGYPT: BEYOND THE PYRAMIDS

History Channel, January 16–19, 6 a.m. ET/PT.

In this four-part documentary, you'll enter the chambers of recently excavated temples and tombs, and uncover secrets that challenge conventional ideas about ancient Egypt. Okay to tape and use in the classroom for two years. Visit www.historychannel.com/classroom for teaching materials.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

A&E, January 18–20 and 23–25, 7 a.m. ET/PT.

This six-part, Emmy award-winning adaptation of Jane Austen's classic comedy of manners stars Colin Firth as prideful Mr. Darcy and Jennifer Ehle as the irrepressible Elizabeth Bennet. Tape it and use in your classroom for two years. Visit www.aetv.com/class for teaching materials.

THE WAR THAT MADE AMERICA

PBS, January 18 and 26, 9–11 p.m., ET/PT. Check local listings.

Fought 250 years ago between super-powers France and Great Britain, which allied with the Iroquois, the French and Indian War had high stakes nothing less than control of North America itself. Find teaching materials at www.thewarthatmadeamerica.org.

CIVIL WAR JOURNAL

History Channel, January 26, 7 a.m., ET/PT.

This series looks at individuals and groups who were active in the Civil War. In this segment, follow the exploits of the 54th Massachusetts—the U.S. Army's first African-American regiment. You can tape this episode for two years of classroom use. Visit www.historychannel.com/classroom for teaching materials.

On TV listings are provided by KIDSNET, a national resource for children's media in Washington, D.C., www.kidsnet.org, and by Cable in the Classroom's Access Learning *magazine at www.ciconline.org.*

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MARKETPLACE jan '06

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American Advantage

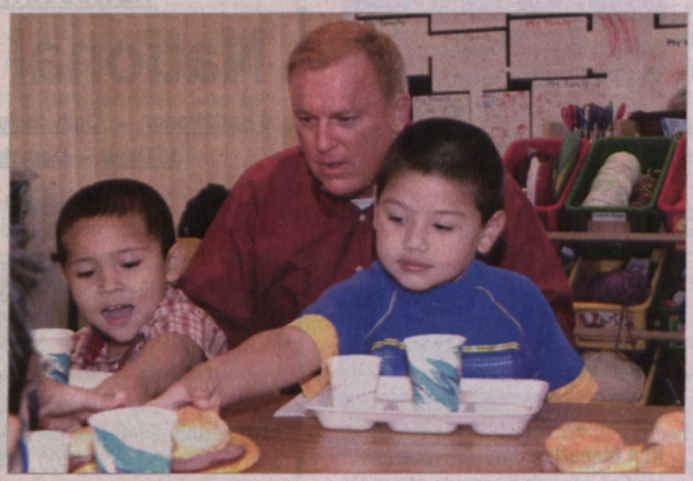
A teacher of the year urges us not to squander the gift of many languages.

BY CHAUNCEY VEATCH

Chauncey Veatch, *the 2002 national Teacher of the Year, served in the U.S. Army for 22 years. He retired as a colonel in 1995 and became an educator. He now teaches high school and preschool children in Coachella Valley, California. This essay is adapted from a talk he gave at NEA headquarters.*

My cabdriver, coming from the airport, was from Mali. The person at the hotel where I checked in is from Ethiopia. They have children, and these are America's children, the people we serve. These children and their parents bring assets to our country. America's many languages give us an advantage that we're throwing away. Four examples:

ONE, NATIONAL SECURITY. What did we hear when we started the war in Iraq? We don't have enough Arabic linguists. We have an advantage that we squander, because we are without parallel a nation with people coming from every corner of the globe, and we should celebrate it.



"AT FOUR YEARS OLD, this little boy already knows that Spanish is not so good, and English is better. That is so wrong."

TWO, THE GLOBAL ECONOMY. Who's more likely to do well in Japan—someone who speaks Japanese and English, or someone who speaks only English?

Some people say kids in bilingual education aren't learning English. Well, I have never met a parent who said to me, "Mr. Veatch, don't teach my children English." They want their children to have opportunity.

Is it tragic when children don't learn English? Yes. And it is also tragic when learning English comes at the expense of their heritage language.

THREE, OTHER LANGUAGES ENRICH your life. American literature icon Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was a professor of romance languages at Harvard. Most experts consider his translation of the 15th-century Spanish poem "Couplets to My Father" to be the most brilliant and tender translation from Spanish to English ever done.

Longfellow wrote "The Song of Hiawatha," and of course his inspiration was our culture, our native peoples. But the actual inspiration to write it, and the whole rhythm and format, came from a compilation of Finnish epic poems, the *Kalevala*, which he first read in German. Longfellow's life was enriched by this, and as a result, our lives are enriched.

FOUR, EMBRACING OUR DIVERSITY is the right thing to do. Every person has value. Civilization is something that is shared, and every single person who's living today is part of a group that has contributed to our civilization. And it's the morally right thing to do to celebrate these gifts.

There's a writer named Carlos Fuentes who talked about the "other." He meant someone we don't know, and he talked about how much fear that can cause. But, he said, when a society is not rejuvenated, it withers and dies. And who are the people renewing and rejuvenating? It's the parents of my students who come from Mexico, from Honduras, from El Salvador. It's this man driving the cab from Mali. They enrich us.

I want to tell you about little Beto in my preK class. I teach high school but after school, I go teach in a preschool program. And my first day, I asked the children, "What's your favorite color, and why?" I asked in English and in Spanish, and I encouraged them to speak back to me in full sentences.

As I got up, one of the little boys was following me with his eyes. Every time I looked back, there was little Beto.

And my fellow teacher, Linda Vasquez, said, "You have a friend."

I said, "Yes, I do. Why particularly this little boy?"

I thought she was going to say, "Because we don't have that many men who teach younger children." But I was wrong. She said, "You spoke Spanish."

Well, she was also telling me that at four years old, this little boy already knows that Spanish is not so good, and English is better. That is so wrong. That is so tragic. That is so cruel. We want this little boy to learn English and we want him to always celebrate the Spanish he brings from home.

I served in the army for the America I love. I serve as a teacher for the America I love. And I'm doing my best to see that others also see this beautiful world that we can all celebrate. Little Beto and his parents deserve that from us.

PHOTO: PATTI REDWAY

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